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Breaking the Silence: The Catholic Sexual Abuse Survivor Movement in Chicago

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ABSTRACT

Breaking the Silence: The Catholic Sexual Abuse Survivor Movement in Chicago

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This dissertation is a history of the lay Catholic clergy sexual abuse survivor movement, analyzed through the lens of three survivor advocacy groups: Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup (LINKUP), the Survivor’s Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), and the Coalition of Concerned Catholics (CCC). More than any other population, the community of survivors comprised by the overlapping membership of these three lay organizations has shaped the discursive framework through which the U.S. news media have understood, articulated, and debated the pain of clergy sexual abuse.

Drawing on four years of archival and ethnographic research, I argue that the Chicago survivor movement descended from the moral and ecclesiological visions of two preceding generations of Chicago Catholic activists, particularly in survivors’ commitment to women’s liturgical participation and the theology of personalism (as descended through the Catholic Worker movement). This research thus demonstrates that American survivors were not, as prior studies have suggested, coopted into a liberal reform agenda by the so-called “Catholic Left.” Rather, in both substance and form the ecclesiological and legal changes sought by LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC stem from the personal connections between the three women who founded the Chicago survivor movement, Jeanne Miller,
Barbara Blaine, and Marilyn Steffel, and their mentors, particularly Nina Polcyn and Patricia Crowley.

By harnessing the pain and suffering of betrayal, the Chicago survivor movement embodies an alternative vision of Catholic social justice. I introduce the term “politics of survivorhood” to describe this vision of the disenfranchised. The key politics of survivorhood explored herein are: (i) the recovery of voice as a means to survive abuse; (ii) the privileging of local communal conscience and democratic processes; (iii) the suspicion of patriarchal communities, prayers, and texts; (iv) a lived anthropology of communal suffering; (v) an approach to the “whole person” that integrates medical and religious approaches to heal body and soul; (vi) a set of judicial and legislative reforms that imagines global child abuse activism through a distinctly American Catholic framework; and (vii) a critique of clerical culture in favor of the post-Vatican II ecclesiological definition of church as “the People of God.”
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

At the third survivor meeting I attended, several members encircled me as I walked into the room. They wanted to impress upon me something important; I listened intently. No one would be disappointed in me, they said, if I needed to stop my participant observation. “You’ll see,” they warned me, “This movement really takes a toll on you. Most survivors only last a couple of years. It’s just too painful to keep doing this.” But far from deepening the depressive solitude of my graduate life, the men and women of the Chicago survivor movement inspired me, injecting my world with hope, energy, and love. I am eternally grateful to have been so warmly welcomed into their community. While I anticipate that some survivors may disagree with aspects of my analysis, I hope that they also feel the tremendous depth of empathy and affection that I feel towards them. Thank you.

The final phases of this study were funded by research travel grants from The American Catholic Historical Association and the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the University of Notre Dame. Northwestern University provided a graduate stipend that helped defer some of my living expenses. This study would not have been feasible without the generosity of these institutions.

Over the years, I have benefited from the counsel and guidance of extraordinary mentors. I am particularly indebted to Tyler T. Roberts and Henry W. Morisada Rieff for introducing me to Religious Studies. Bruce Lincoln taught me to be wary of power and
authority. Catherine Brekus, Kathleen Neils Conzen, Michelle Molina, Dylan Penningroth, and Sylvester Johnson helped me see the world through historians’ eyes. Christine Helmer patiently taught me how to be a better research and teaching assistant.

The diverse perspectives of my dissertation committee likewise enriched every aspect of this project. Sarah McFarland Taylor emboldened me to study material culture. Cristina L. H. Traina fostered my interests in ethics and theology, and I would not have completed this project without her consistent and thoughtful feedback. My advisor, Robert A. Orsi, has been generous, patient, caring, and kind. From the moment he took me under his wing, Bob has surpassed all obligations as a mentor, sharing truly with me the fullness of the intellectual life. Thank you.

Along the road, other faculty gave encouragement when I needed it most. John C. Seitz pushed me to consider more carefully the depths of this material. Kristy Nabhan-Warren lent insight into the joys and challenges of ethnography. Kathryn Lofton reminded me to look for theoretical insight in the disciplines furthest from my own.

Among my peers, there are too many to acknowledge here by name. In particular, Amanda Baugh, Christopher Cantwell, Matthew J. Cressler, and Catherine Osborne fed my body and mind. The members of the North American Religions Workshop provided generous doses of critique. My fellow graduate students in the Department of Religious Studies created a vibrant and healthy environment within which to work. Kate Dugan, through our writing group of two, demanded accountability and inspired my best prose.

The solitude of archival research was routinely punctured by the joviality of my friends. It would take book to thank everyone with whom I’ve shared a beer. The company
of Matt, Mary Ellen, Stacey, Phil, Brendan, and Brandon made four long Chicago winters feel positively warm. In Cleveland, Tina and I have been blessed with the friendship of other young families, particularly Maggie, Elliot, Meghan, Shachar, Stephanie, Ron, Michael, Amanda, and all of the children.

My family has contributed more emotional and financial support than I could ever repay. My parents, Vicki and Steve, my siblings, Amber and Brandon, and my aunt Marlene have shaped me in ways that I am only beginning to recognize. During this project, they kindly learned to ask not what I was writing but instead what I was learning. My in-laws, Rick, Susan, Ellen, Paul, Evie, and Warren helped me relax, and they suffered the rudeness of my work habits when I refused to take time off. Snuffy, Carmen, Tina, and Otto embraced me as their own, allowing me the joy of knowing for the first time what having grandparents felt like. Addy’s companionship has ensured that I never write alone. These kin have given my son, Liam, a more robust family life than I ever imagined.

Tina and I are expecting our second child by the end of this month. While my scholarly debts to her are innumerable, nothing compares to the light she shines daily onto my world. I could not dream of a more perfect lover, friend, mother, or colleague. Of all the joys in my life, Tina, being your partner is the greatest.
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bishop-Accountability.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCC</td>
<td>Coalition of Concerned Catholics</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCW</td>
<td>Chicago Catholic Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CFM</td>
<td>Christian Family Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>Call to Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-VOTF</td>
<td>Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYO</td>
<td>Catholic Youth Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>LINKUP</td>
<td>Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup (formerly VOCAL)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCCB</td>
<td>National Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>National Catholic Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP</td>
<td>Survivor’s Network of Those Abused by Priests</td>
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<tr>
<td>USCCB</td>
<td>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOCAL</td>
<td>Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup (later LINKUP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOTF</td>
<td>Voice of the Faithful</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOC</td>
<td>Women’s Ordination Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>YCS</td>
<td>Young Christian Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>YCW</td>
<td>Young Christian Workers</td>
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For my children.
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INTRODUCTION

Breaking the Silence

My initial ethnographic encounter with the Chicago survivor movement was a regular monthly meeting of survivors and survivor-advocates in a parochial classroom at St. James, a parish in the northwest suburb of Arlington Heights. The community—which numbered only fourteen individuals that evening—opened the gathering with the Lord’s prayer, saying “Our Mother, who art in Heaven,” as they joined hands. Next, they spent 30 minutes discussing recent stories, as mediated through news media or the firsthand accounts of other survivors, regarding recent regional cases of abuse. Then they assessed how Cardinal Francis George and other regional bishops had been handling some of those cases. Finally, they devised and debated possible actions they might initiate over the following months. These included holding a protest at the Cardinal’s mansion, leafleting at suspected abusers’ former parishes, lobbying politicians, and cooking dinner for two survivors who had become reclusive. The meeting ran over its allotted two hours before the group agreed on even one of these actions. Instead, they abruptly called themselves to a close by communally reading a passage from St. Catherine of Siena and reciting a prayer for peace attributed to St. Francis of Assisi.

At the time, I was unsure of what to make of these devotions. I did not recognize the Jocist “Observe-Judge-Act” formula that structured the meeting, nor did I identify their
practice with the Catholicism of my childhood.¹ But these people were surely and recognizably Catholic. A candid essay by James T. Fisher captures this feeling of certainty amid ethnographic confusion. Fisher describes the shock of his realization, when he turned “in despair” to the writings of Andrew Greeley to contextualize Dorothy Day’s faith, that even the most accomplished scholars can be blind to “the dark side” of Catholic history. To quote Fisher:

I had no doubt believing that many Catholics tended to have similar attitudes toward sex, race, and religion. But what about the dropouts, castaways, and rebels bred from the same system? Who spoke for those Catholics who had no piece of the Church to claim as their own, yet were nowhere else at home?²

Unlike Fisher, who felt akin to the “Catholic counterculture” he was describing, I had never observed anything quite like this kind of Catholicism before. But the ecclesiological concerns, the prayers, the bodily configuration of the room around a desk qua altar – these basic observations had affirmed my sense that there was something quite specifically Catholic about the survivor movement, something that Catholic historians must be missing.

My first effort to situate this project within Catholic studies was in March 2011, when I shared the draft of my dissertation prospectus with the North American Religions Workshop at Northwestern University. The most biting critique came from Philip Gleason, the estimable emeritus historian of U.S. Catholicism, who had retired to Evanston after a

¹ “Jocist” is a common referent within both Catholic Studies and among my field subjects. The word comes from the French nominalization, les jocistes, which became the vernacular term in both English and French for naming supporters of the Cardinal Joseph Leo Cardijn’s Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (the original French for the group we now refer to in English simply as the Young Christian Worker (YCS) movement).

long career at the University of Notre Dame. By that point I had become accustomed to subtle and soft-spoken feedback from him. But at this presentation, he told me with not a small hint of exasperation, “I don’t see what you’re interested in – these people just sound like a bunch of Protestants.” I have since heard echoes of that critique – including the variant, “What kind of Catholics are you studying?”– nearly every time that I have presented a portion of this research publicly. Although I am not in the theological practice of defining who is or is not authentically Catholic, there has been no doubt in my mind, from the first ethnographic encounter I had with survivors, that this project would pose a substantive challenge to our understanding of the history of Roman Catholicism in the United States.

**Main Argument**

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that the ecclesiology and politics of the Chicago survivor movement owe less to local survivors’ shared experiences of priestly victimization than to its founders’ adult reform experiences. The survivor movement has been shaped profoundly by two strands of American Catholicism: Catholic Worker personalism and female liturgical innovation. As such, the Chicago survivor movement has not been coopted by external “progressive” Catholic reformers, as some have suggested. Likewise, the survivor movement began in Chicago; it was in this city that survivors found their voice, proclaiming survivorhood through the deeper history of American Catholicism, particularly the special place of the disenfranchised within the theology of the Mystical Body of Christ. When I have discussed this research with other historians, their impulse
has been to suggest that the survivor movement began in Chicago because of Cardinal Bernardin, who, through a combination of mishandling early abuse cases and three separate allegations in 1993 that he was an abuser, must have so enraged local survivors such that they were spurred into action. But one of my clearest findings is that Bernardin is tangential to this story. If anything, his deft managerial approach set the precedent that most American bishops followed until the 2002 Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, also known as the Dallas Charter. Furthermore, the Chicago survivor movement has sought to transform victims’ experiences of betrayal into a robust agenda of legal, religious, and moral accountability. Finally, my ethnography reveals that, in spite of their individual experiences of profound betrayal, survivors continue to find meaning in devotional and liturgical practices, and they yearn to reclaim and reform their Church through public displays of their collective pain and suffering.

**Breaking the Historians’ Silence**

The first large communal gathering of priestly sexual abuse survivors was held just one mile from the St. James classroom in Arlington Heights. Three women, Jeanne Miller, Marilyn Steffel, and Barbara Blaine, co-organized a weekend retreat called “Breaking the Silence” in 1991. The event brought together a network of more than 300 abuse victims from across the United States, as well as a cadre of emerging experts on the issue of priestly sexual abuse, and several prominent priests. Cardinal Bernardin was supposed to be there, but he withdrew at the last minute. Andrew Greeley, who took his place, was

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3 I discuss the allegations against Bernardin at greater length in Chapter 4.
heckled and booed by the victims, who were angry that he had ignored their request that he
not wear the clerical collar. The “silence” I mean to challenge with this monograph is the
academic silence, the historical silence. Particularly within Catholic Studies, there has been
an astonishing paucity of attention given to the “dark side” of the Catholic 1950s – 1970s,
the era in which, according to the John Jay Reports, sexual molestation and rape of
Catholic children, adolescents, and teenagers reached its peak. Had the abuse scandal not
“broken” until 2002, this silence might be more intelligible, but Chicago survivors had
been publicizing their pain for more than thirty years.

The relative scarcity of scholarly studies reflects the challenges that our newfound
knowledge of priestly child abuse has created, particularly the disjunct between abuse
revelations and the normative model that has dominated the last 50 years of scholarship on
U.S. Catholicism. Among historians, there is broad consensus that the Second Vatican
Council (1962 – 1965) signaled the beginning of a new era of modernization as witnessed
by lay empowerment, institutional transparency, intellectual freedom, the modernization of
the priesthood, and improved pastoral care.4 The sexual abuse scandal has forced us to
abandon this now-defunct narrative of postconciliar democratization. But how do we make
sense of the pieces that are left? This work builds on studies that have begun to examine
the abuses through several discrete lenses, including the systemic underpinnings of the

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crisis; the implications for church policies; the shortcomings of seminary culture; the ethical implications of the church’s failure; the financial and legislative outcomes of abuse lawsuits; and feminist and liberationist readings of both Catholic and Protestant clergy abuse survivorhood. The myriad sociological studies that have examined Boston’s Voice of the Faithful as a case study in social movement organization theory have provided an essential comparative frame. I have also consulted the work of journalists, especially Jason Berry and the Spotlight team of *The Boston Globe*, who have cumulatively dedicated far more resources to telling the stories of survivors than scholars. Despite of the groundbreaking work of these studies, none have thus far changed the dominant narrative in Catholic studies of a democratization of the priesthood and the laity in the post-conciliar

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10 Fortune *Sexual Violence*; Traina, *Erotic Attunement*.


12 Journalistic accounts have sometimes taken less admirable approaches, including voyeuristic exposés of child victimization or even the regurgitation of centuries-old anti-Catholic tropes, but those are a small minority.
era, in part because we lack an arch-narrative within which to make sense of survivorhood. One of the main contributions of this study is that, in uncovering the relationship between the survivor movement and prior Catholic subcultures (the Catholic Worker and Catholic feminism), I have demonstrated that survivors do fit into American Catholic history, just not in its dominant, most celebrated strand.

By and large, current scholarship has overlooked the voices of survivors, the history of the survivor movement, the embodied experiences of abused families, survivors’ ecclesiological reforms, and the political goals of Catholic victim-advocate organizations. My research is among the first attempts to study the crisis “on the ground.” Rather than focusing on bishops and lawsuits, I have studied these events from the viewpoint of everyday laypersons. I examine the aftermath of these crimes, particularly the way that Chicago’s survivors forged a movement and through its primary organizations have labored intensively to transform their memories of pain and suffering into powerful ecclesiological and political messages. The only other study that I am aware of, which takes so centrally the voices of survivor-victims, is currently being conducted by my advisor and mentor, Robert A. Orsi, whose longstanding research on pain, belonging, and Catholic childhood has led him to investigate the “inner world” of abuse victims. Unlike my local case study of lay nonprofit organizations, Orsi’s is an anthropology of the spirituality of suffering, informed by nationwide interviews with a much more diverse population of victims. Orsi intends ultimately to theorize and historicize, in at least one an
book-length monograph, the devotional rituals in which individual sufferers have found the greatest meaning and comfort.  

The Boundaries of this Case Study

This dissertation is a case study of the lived history of the three largest survivor lay nonprofit organizations in Chicago: Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup (LINKUP), the Survivor’s Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), and the Coalition of Concerned Catholics (CCC). LINKUP and SNAP spread from their grassroots origins in Chicago to the official formation of national and international chapters. In its heyday, LINKUP was the largest community of survivors in the world; today, SNAP lays claim to that privilege. It was no coincidence that these two organizations were formed, within the span of just two years, in the same city. CCC is now the most active survivor group in Chicago. Below, I outline the significance of Chicago within the broader national and global Catholic clergy sexual abuse crisis, and I analyze the reasons why it was here that victim-survivors first organized into large networks. By focusing on these organizations, we are challenged to rethink essential aspects of American Catholicism.

Although survivors have been an incredibly influential subpopulation, I also want to remind readers that they are, statistically, but a small proportion of Chicago Catholics. In 1993, the Archdiocese of Chicago was the largest Roman Catholic diocese in the United States, claiming 2.6 million Catholics in Cook and Lake counties, 800 hospitals and charitable institutions, the largest private school district in the U.S, and the nation’s largest private social services agency, The Catholic Charities. Such numbers dwarf the size of the Chicago survivor movement, which peaked in 2005 at a national roster of 7,000 members; outside of the annual LINKUP and SNAP conferences, survivors’ local monthly support groups tended to attract less than two to three dozen members per meeting. Nevertheless, the history of LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC offers particular insights into the history of American Catholicism.

LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC represent a specific set of rituals and ecclesiological goals shared by their members. These organizations have been enormously influential not just within Chicago, but across North America and even within the broadest international geopolitical interpretations of the abuse crisis. While the local specificity of Roman Catholic practice in Chicago is central to the lived history of the survivor movement, my research subjects are not paradigmatic of the city’s Catholic residents or even of the majority of survivors in the greater-Chicago metropolitan area. But more than any other population, these three overlapping communities of survivors have shaped the discursive

framework through which everyday parishioners, other survivors, and the news media understand, articulate, and debate the pain of clergy sexual abuse.

My central argument is that the charism and character of the Chicago survivor movement descended directly from the moral and theological commitments of two prior generations of Chicago Catholic activists. This lineage reveals much more than just the social historical context within which the founders of the survivor movement had grown up. Rather, I am arguing that this genealogy provides the historical lens that unlocks the central questions of my research.

(i) This genealogy is essential for understanding the location of the Chicago survivor movement within American Catholicism. These survivors – this local survivor movement – descends directly from a minority, if persistently influential line of twentieth-century Catholic activists.

(ii) The lineage of Chicago survivors demonstrates that the movement has neither been corrupted nor coopted by the so-called “Catholic Left.” Rather, the political and ecclesiological goals of the Chicago survivor movement descend logically from their collective inheritance. The “progressive” reforms sought by LINKUP, SNAP, and later CCC are intrinsic to the Chicago survivor movement. Even as individual members of these field sites sometimes disagree on issues such as women’s ordination or homosexuality, the movement’s leaders have articulated those agendas because they are part and parcel of the broader personalist and liberationist theologies through which the Chicago survivor movement was born.
(iii) This history explains why world’s two largest survivor organizations were founded in the same city, just two years apart. The survivor movement began in Chicago not because of Cardinal Bernardin’s (mis)handling of abuse allegations, but rather because it was here that a network of female lay apostles had been empowered by personalism and Catholic Action.\textsuperscript{15} Barbara Blaine and Marilyn Steffel had effectively inherited from Polcyn and Crowley the Jocist method and feminist theology that gave shape to early survivor meetings and protests.

(iv) This genealogy sheds light on the personal and organizational conflicts between LINKUP and SNAP. The related but distinct inheritances of Blaine, Miller, and Steffel allow us to appreciate the divergent, at times confrontational political agendas of the country’s two largest survivor organizations. As with any genealogy, there is more than one “bloodline” of Catholic Action examined here. The subtle differences between the Crowley and Polcyn “gene pools” produced rival siblings.

(v) Simultaneously, the broader overlapping network of Chicago laywomen illustrates why it is analytically helpful to conceptualize these two organizations as part of one Chicago survivor movement. As the initial distinctions between SNAP and LINKUP wore away, and especially after the survivor movement spread nationally (and then

\textsuperscript{15} As is often the case in Catholic history it can be difficult to look past the hierarchy’s long shadow. Upon initial observation, it seemed to me rather obvious that Cardinal Bernardin must have been the decisive factor. Bernardin was, after all, the highest prelate to date who was accused in national news media of being an ephebophile. And prior to the personal accusations against him, other American bishops had upheld Bernardin’s management of the crisis as the national blueprint for controlling the Church’s financial liability and minimizing the moral fallout. But my research found nothing new to support the accusations that had been made by Cooke and other victims. Nor did I find much strategic fault in the cardinal’s tactics, which were in my reading, though not pastoral or compassionate, masterfully choreographed.
internationally) in the 1990s and 2000s, the personal boundaries and borders between these organizations became increasingly porous. By comparison to the survivor communities that subsequently arose in other regions, the sibling rivalries within the Chicago movement seem minimal. To take but one example, the survivor-advocacy organizations formed a decade later in Boston – Voice of the Faithful, Bishop Accountability, Speak Truth to Power, and Concerned Catholic Parents – also contain strong elements of personalism and feminist theology, but their genealogy was distinct, descended not through Polcyn or Crowley but through the militant pacifism of the Berrigan Brothers and the Thomas Dooley’s reframing of communism as a humanitarian crisis.

(vi) The collective lineage here explored demonstrates in a profound way that sociological questions of whether the survivor movement is comprised of “pre- or post-Vatican II Catholics” miss the mark. Likewise misleading are extant religious taxonomies that seek to reduce Catholic politics to conservative vs. liberal or left vs. right. To take but one example demonstrated below, the prominent “People of God” language in the survivor movement owes not to survivors’ nostalgia for the unfulfilled potential of *Gaudium et Spes*, but rather descends directly from Polcyn and Crowley’s respective visions for enacting the Mystical Body of Christ.

The history of this embodied succession of female Catholic activists thus enables us to understand the broad strands of American Catholicism, as well as the fine strands of Chicago Catholic Action, that animate the Chicago survivor movement, the two most vital of which are Catholic personalism and liturgical reform.
Methodology

My findings are based on archival and ethnographic research conducted between March 2011 and May 2015. Methodologically, I drew on ethnography, archival sources, and material culture (in that order) to create a tangible portrait of the processes through which survivors have broken their silence and transformed the traumatic experience of abuse into a national reform agenda.

My ethnography was conducted within the Chicago survivor movement. For two years, I attended the events hosted by CCC and SNAP, including their private weekly meetings. Although Linkup closed in 2005, I interviewed several of the founding members. I also conducted forty life story interviews with members of SNAP and CCC. I distributed anonymous surveys to these interviewees, as well as other members, in order to analyze the demographics of the survivor movement, particularly the socioeconomics of each community. I participated in the events and rituals sponsored by my field sites, including protests, marches, Masses, prayer vigils, and lobbying efforts. I volunteered five hours a month to assist each community with technological and administrative tasks. In order to gain better perspective on how these local concerns and activities fit into the national survivor movement, I attended two CTA-CCC, three annual SNAP, and two annual VOTF conference-retreats.

After building ethnographic relationships with key survivors, I was fortunate to gain access to their private archives. I am the first scholar to gain access to LINKUP and SNAP materials, including video, newsletter, and internal memos. To contextualize these private documents, I visited the archives at the Archdiocese of Chicago, the Chicago
Historical Society, the University of Notre Dame, Marquette University, and Loyola University of Chicago.

As I met more members of the movement, they offered me posters and buttons from their protests, songs and memorabilia from their conferences, and poems and artwork through which they have created new religious meanings from their experiences of spiritual betrayal and sexual abuse. Over the four years of my research, I created an archive of the prayers, posters, buttons, poems, t-shirts, relics, scapulars and other material culture created by the reform movement. These objects offer a visceral portrait of the theologies, emotions, and politics at work in the survivor movement.

My focus on survivor voices means that I have largely excluded the institutional responses of the Roman Catholic Church – including the Holy See, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Archdiocese of Chicago – from my research, only discussing them insofar as they relate to the lived experiences of LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC members. The Church’s programs and reforms in response to allegations of clergy sexual abuse would require a full, separate study to untangle this complicated history. At every level, particularly since 2002, various instruments of the Roman Catholic hierarchy have created reform guidelines and pastoral counseling programs aimed at ministering to and healing survivors. The institutional church has also, as I will discuss within the chapters, at every level intimidated, silenced, and impeached many of the adults who have come forward with allegations of having been abused by one or more priests as children. Further study is needed to complement and expand this research, and I urge anyone
interested in studying the abuse crisis to take seriously the institutional efforts of individual priests and, in particular, formal Roman Catholic bodies.

**The Chicago Survivor Movement**

“The survivor movement” is an emic phrase used by the founders of LINKUP and SNAP to summarize and contextualize their self-understanding of the relationship among their Chicago-based organizations in the early 1990s. Today, many survivor advocacy groups across the globe lay claim to being part of “the survivor movement.” Emic uses of this term also often include smaller advocacy groups (based anywhere around the globe); whistleblowers from within the Church; compassionate priests (also sometimes called “priests of integrity”); allied non-Catholic religious and non-governmental secular individuals and institutions; supportive politicians; financial donors; interested academics; sympathetic journalists; and all family members of clergy abuse victims.

The phrase “Chicago Survivor Movement” is my phrase to denote the members of LINKUP and SNAP and their organizational offspring. In using that phrase, I am excluding victim-survivors who live in the greater-Chicago area but do not belong to these organizations; affiliated and allied institutions and organizations (in all of the categories above); as well as the national and international memberships of LINKUP and SNAP. The notable exception to these exclusions are the paid and volunteer staff of LINKUP and SNAP, regardless of whether they work(ed) primarily from the Chicago-based offices of these nonprofit organizations.
Defining Survivorhood

Not all survivors were physically victimized by a priest. In addition to survivors who were physically molested or raped, survivors include physical victims’ family members, spouses, loved ones, friends, and neighbors. There are also many members in the Chicago survivor movement who have never identified themselves as having personally known a physical victim prior to joining the movement. By “physical victim,” I mean an adult who was, as a child, adolescent or young adult, molested, fondled, raped, sodomized, videotaped pornographically, or otherwise directly engaged in sexual relations as a legal minor (ages 1–17) with one or more clergy, employees, or women religious of the Roman Catholic Church. Although the term “physical victim” has the advantage of being clearly delimited and defined, I rarely use it within the ensuing chapters for two important reasons.

First, I never heard a survivor use the phrase “physical victim;” Chicago survivors do not make any distinctions between physical and non-physical victimhood. In emic usage among the Chicago survivor movement, neither “survivor” nor “victim” nor “survivorhood” specifies whether an individual was a physical victim as defined above. And it has always been so. Of the three founders of the Chicago Survivor Movement (Miller, Blaine, and Steffel), only Barbara Blaine would self-identify according to the criteria of the etic category physical victim. Yet all of these women have described themselves as “victims,” actively identify with the category of “survivor,” and have forged, more than any other individuals, the nationally and internationally normative understandings of what constitutes “survivorhood.” Of the three terms victim, survivor, and survivorhood, the word “survivor” was by far the most prevalent within my research.
All of the victims I interviewed preferred using the word “survivor” in both naming the movement and in describing their relationship to that broader community.\textsuperscript{16}

Secondly, in addition to this lack of any emic distinction, I think that historians have an equal obligation to attend to the religious experiences of all survivors. The crisis of clergy sexual abuse occurred within a specific social and religious field. The pain and suffering – both physical and spiritual – of clergy abuse extended far beyond the individual bodies that priests violated. The abuse crisis destroyed, for many American Catholics, their most intimate ways of knowing the world. By any definition, then, we cannot limit our use of these terms solely for the sake of taxonomic convenience. \textit{Therefore, throughout this monograph, a “survivor” describes a self-identified member of the Chicago Survivor Movement.}

In addition to the ethnographic and moral reasons that I favor “survivor,” it is also the most analytically precise taxon available. Here, I will give four examples to illustrate the complexities and potential distortions of attempting otherwise.\textsuperscript{17}

(a) Survivor “A” was a co-founder of the Chicago survivor movement. One or more of A’s relatives and closest friends were physical victims. She has never publicly self-identified as a physical victim, but told me that much of her determination came from being a physical victim of \textit{non-priestly} sexual abuse when she was in college.

\textsuperscript{16} This convention is, of course, emblematic of a much broader cultural shift away from the language of victimization, towards the “reclaiming” of one’s identity by proclaiming oneself or one’s loved ones “survivor(s).” The profound experiences of life events as diverse as war, AIDS, rape, and cancer are now most frequently described through the empowering self-help lens of survivorhood.

\textsuperscript{17} All of the following examples are real people discussed subsequently in the dissertation, but for reasons that will be immediately apparent I have used a different pseudonym for them here than the one I use for each throughout the rest of the monograph.
(b) Survivor “B” did not join the local movement until 2002. B has never publicly self-identified as a physical victim, not even to the other members of the Chicago survivor organization(s) to which she belongs. But both B and her late husband were physically victimized, separately and by different priests, before they met one another. B does not “feel right” claiming victimhood on behalf of her late husband. The priest that raped B was also her cousin, and the assault occurred when they were both minors (albeit he was nearly a decade older than her), in the context of a family event. So, B explained to me, she considers that “incest,” and “sexual assault,” but would not place herself in the narrower definition of a physical victim. I am the first, and she says only person, other than her biological sister (also assaulted by this cousin) to whom she has ever spoken of her physical victimhood.

(c) Survivor “C” joined the Chicago Survivor Movement in 2004. She is now one of its most prominent leaders. She has spoken individually about her reasons for joining the movement with some (not all) of the local members of her organization(s). Before C moved to Chicago, she placed a relative in the care of her spiritual mentor, colleague, friend, and boss: the priest who lived in the house immediately next door to her own. Both houses bordered their parish. This priest was, at the time, formally training C for a promotion within the diocese. C’s spouse was also a parish employee. The priest and his invited guests ritually abused C’s relative, a six-year old child, for two years before C recognized the pattern of abuse. Although C has never publically self-described as a victim, let alone a physical victim, any critical observer should recognize that C was – in addition to her child relative – personally abused in spirit, psychology, and profession.
(d) Survivor “D” has been in and out of the Chicago Survivor Movement since 2002. Although occasionally in leadership capacities, D never attends the protests nor the Eucharistic liturgies sponsored by her organization(s). D has publically self-ascribed as a concerned, devout parishioner whose personal investment in the crisis stems primarily from the fact that her uncle was a priest who has been legally convicted and laicized for sexually abusing minors. As D readily admits, when she was a child, “everyone in the family” knew about the uncle-priest’s sexual predilection for adolescent boys. No one said anything, and now D feels guilty. But – and to reiterate, this was told to me in a highly confidential, off-the-record comment – D’s husband, who has never attended an event hosted by LINKUP or SNAP, was a physical victim (as defined above). No one but a few of the relatives on his side of the family, D said, know of his physical victimization.

As these four examples demonstrate, one of the reasons the broader term “survivor” likely appeals to members of the Chicago Survivor Community is because it allows not only for an array of experiences of abuse, but also for a range of levels of confidentiality. One of the earliest findings of my ethnographic research was the realization that many members of the survivor movement are passionate because they or a loved one was physically victimized. But, the reason they “belong” to the survivor movement is in part because of the comfort of knowing that they do not have to self-identify as a physical victim in order to be a fully –active, -engaged, -loved, and –healed within the survivor community.
Emic Distinctions within the Movement

There is much organizational overlap within the Chicago movement, and none of the survivor leaders explicitly discourage members of their community from joining one or more of the other 501c(3)s that have been formed here since 1982. The largest survivor-advocacy lay nonprofit organizations founded in Chicago have been: Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup (VOCAL/LINKUP; 1982 – 2005); the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP; 1988 – present); Call to Action’s Coalition of Concerned Catholics (CCC; 2002 – present); and seven distinct Chicago charters of Voice of the Faithful (C-VOTF; 2002 – present). Some of these organizations have enjoyed long histories of harmonious cooperative action; others have been characterized more by competitive “sibling” rivalry. Although these various nonprofits existed separately on paper, they were never completely distinct communities. In fact, only two field sites and one extensive archive were available for this study. I will briefly summarize these three organizational foci, to make explicit how eleven 501(c)3s have yielded only three distinct variants within the Chicago Survivor Movement.

LINKUP was the earliest, now defunct, nonprofit, formed in 1982 as a response to the abuse of a group of adolescent boys at St. Edna’s parish in Arlington Heights, IL. When some of the parents and parish staff members joined in bringing forward the allegations to their Church, their pleas for help were met with swift denial and severe threats from the Archdiocese of Chicago, then under the leadership of the newly-appointed Joseph Cardinal Bernardin. Two women, Jeanne Miller (one of the boys’ mothers) and Marilyn Steffel, St. Edna’s Director of Religious Education, persisted in their efforts to
pursue justice for survivors. Under the spiritual guidance of Patricia Crowley and with behind-the-scenes support from the Women’s Ordination Conference and Chicago Catholic Women organizations, Miller filed a lawsuit (1982 – 1985) and waged a self-promoted national media campaign (1985 – 1988) that included a book (published under the pseudonym Hilary Stiles), investigative features on news broadcast, and ultimately appearances on major talk shows including Oprah, Phil Donahue, and Larry King Live. After the unanticipated success of those national media appearances, Steffel supported Miller in her effort to found the first formally incorporated nonprofit for Catholic abuse victims (1988 –1991). LINKUP organized the first mass communal gathering of survivors, from around the country, in a retreat held at an Arlington Heights hotel and organized around the theme of “Breaking the Silence.” After the conference, Miller resigned from LINKUP, handing the nonprofit over to Rev. Tom Economus. Steffel likewise withdrew from the organization, although she continued to coordinate the annual national conference-retreat until Economus’s death in 2002. LINKUP declined precipitously from 2002 – 2005, partially as a result of inadequate funding to support an ambitious and innovative national survivor retreat center in Kentucky called “The Farm.” The history of LINKUP is recounted in greater detail in Chapters 2 – 5, based on the organizations’ private archives, news media coverage, and oral histories of former members, as well as recorded interviews with Miller and Steffel.

My first field site was SNAP. Although based in Chicago, the international nonprofit did not host many events in the greater Chicago area. I supplemented my fieldwork with archival records, news media accounts, oral histories, and interviews with
all of the current SNAP officers. Barbara Blaine founded SNAP in 1988 as one of her many Catholic Worker ministries, coordinated out of the St. Elizabeth’s House of Hospitality for the Poor and Desteinate, on the south side of Chicago. By 1993, with the emotional and financial backing of Nina Polcyn Moore, Blaine devoted herself fulltime to SNAP and incorporated it formally as 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Polcyn was one of the most influential Catholic Action leaders in the United States from 1934 - 1973. The histories of Polcyn and Blaine will be explored in Chapters 2 – 3, and analysis of the lived history of SNAP is included in Chapters 3 – 6.

My main field site for participant observation was CCC/C-VOTF. When I began my ethnographic research these nonprofits met separately on a monthly basis, in spite of an 80% overlap in the 20 most active members of both organizations. In 2013, the aging membership decided that, while the two 501(c) 3s ought remain separate for financial purposes, all of their meetings henceforth would be conducted together, as would the direct actions they planned in those meetings. For the sake of clarity, I refer to these groups as a single field site, using the abbreviation CCC, since its officers were largely responsible for implementing actions and events outside of the two groups’ meetings. In addition to participant observation, I obtained material on CCC/C-VOTF from these organizations’ internal documents and correspondence, field interviews with active members, news media accounts, and oral history interviews with former members.

CCC was formed in 2002, when several of longstanding Call to Action leaders were dismayed by revelations in Boston of an extensive archdiocesan cover-up orchestrated by Cardinal Bernard Law. Lacking unanimous support from the national Call
to Action’s membership, the local Chicago Call to Action chapter sought out survivors and new advocates to form CCC. This “new” group quickly outgrew the active members in Chicago-CTA and began to take on its own identity. By 2004, only one of the original founding CTA-CCC members remained.\(^{18}\)

Chicagoland-Voice of the Faithful was one of seven VOTF charters formally established in the greater Chicago area from 2003 – 2004. These were independent charters forged by local dues-paying members of the enormous national Voice of the Faithful organization based in Boston. VOTF was founded in 2002, alongside nearly a dozen other survivor advocacy nonprofits, and by 2004 the national VOTF counted as members 75,000 donors and electronic newsletter subscribers.\(^ {19}\) Of the seven charters founded in Chicago, only two remain in 2015. My field site, Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful, meets in conjunction with CCC in Arlington Heights, the same Irish, middle-class suburb within which SNAP was founded. This Chicagoland charter includes members from the now-defunct VOTF charters that were formed in the Chicago suburbs of Oak Park, Berea, and Downer’s Grove. I also explored the second charter that remained in 2011, Wilmette-

\(^{18}\) This individual, former Young Christian Student president, Bernard Henning, is still an active member of CCC-CVOTF today.

\(^{19}\) The most influential of the Boston survivor-advocacy groups have been Voice of the Faithful (VOTF), Bishop-Accountability.org (BA.org), and Victims Speak Truth to Power (STToP). I conducted preliminary archival, ethnographic, and oral history interviews at all three organizations, but that research fell beyond the scope of this case study. There are also several chapters of SNAP in Boston, and they remain quite active today. Additionally, the individuals who cofounded VOTF also started other successful survivor nonprofits, such as Survivors’ First and the Coalition of Catholics and Survivors, but these were eventually subsumed into VOTF and BA.org.
VOTF, but chose for both logistical and analytical reasons not to conduct extensive fieldwork at that site.\textsuperscript{20}

The Demographics of the Chicago Survivor Movement

I collected basic demographic data from the local members of my two field sites, CCC and SNAP. I distributed 41 anonymous questionnaires, and received 28 responses. Many of the members of these sites are spouses, and I asked couples to complete one questionnaire together. I would like to highlight the most significant trends from the responses received.

**Age:** In addition to continuing to work through the psychological and spiritual trauma of their abuse, many members of the Chicago survivor movement are beginning to face the daunting task of dying with dignity. The survivors included in my fieldwork were, on average, 75 years old at the beginning of this three-year study, and most of my field contacts were hospitalized for non-abuse related illness at least once during that interval. This climate of diminishing physical health may have influenced the frequency, and certainly influenced the content, of survivors’ communications with and prayers for one another.

\textsuperscript{20} The Wilmette charter had no former members of LINKUP, no active members of SNAP, and had never choreographed its programming in dialogue with physical-victims. (In 2011, none of the Wilmette members self-identified as physical-victims). The sporadic gatherings of Wilmette branch also posed logistical challenges, as their small 501(c)3 only came together as a physical community for 2 – 3 public lecture events each year.
Income: The members of the Chicago Survivor Movement represent a broad range of socioeconomic means. At the height of their respective careers, respondents had earned a median annual household income of approximately $58,000 (adjusted to 2014 for inflation). As the source of those earnings, 63% of respondents identified managerial or white-collar desk jobs; 22% had practiced as a lawyer, professor, or medical doctor; and 14% cited blue-collar labor in the manufacturing or service industries. The lowest annual household income reported was $18,000; the highest was $1.7 million.

Ethnicity: When asked their race, all of the respondents identified as “White or Caucasian.” (None selected “Black,” “Hispanic, Latino/a,” or “Other.”) When asked to select the predominant ethnicity of their ancestors, 58% wrote “Irish,” 16% “German,” 11% “Italian,” 5% “Polish,” 8% “Other.”

Theoretical Interventions and Technical Terms

Below, I define the four theoretical concepts that recur throughout the dissertation: the politics of survivorhood; countercultural and counter-public; personalism; and female liturgical innovation.

The Politics of Survivorhood

Chicago’s survivor organizations have been criticized – by media, by the bishops, and most crucially, by other survivors – for their broader ecclesiological and theological goals. A core aim of my dissertation was to determine from whence this political agenda originated. Following the logic of the movement’s critics, I originally hypothesized that the survivors had been corrupted, perhaps even naively co-opted, by a more established and
broader coalition of progressive Catholic reform organizations. My research revealed a far more complex and interesting history, namely that the “politics of survivorhood” are intrinsic to the survivor movement itself. These politics, in fact, formed the basis for the founding survivors who broke the silence, and have continued to animate the rituals through which Chicago survivors attempt to reclaim their “voice.”

I have created the concept “politics of survivorhood,” to taxonomize the collective reform agenda that unites LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC into the singular Chicago survivor movement. Seven political goals unite the Chicago survivor movement: (i) recovery of voice as a means to survive abuse; (ii) privileging of local communal conscience and democratic processes; (iii) suspicion of patriarchal communities, prayers, and texts; (iv) an anthropology of social justice; (v) an approach to the “whole person” that integrates medical and religious approaches to heal body and soul; (vi) juridical and legislative lobbying that imagines child abuse activism through a distinctively Catholic framework; and (vii) a critique of clerical culture in favor of a fundamentalist interpretation of the Vatican II ecclesiology of church as “the People of God.”

This typology, which emerged from my ethnographic observations, describes the movement’s deep roots in Catholic Action, particularly the moral framework of personalism and the lay empowerment of female liturgy. But this typology also reflects the transformations in Chicago Catholic Action after Vatican II. Some of those transformations were linguistic, such as the shift away from speaking of “the Mystical Body of Christ” in favor of the phrase from *Lumen Gentium*, “the People of God.” But other transformations were notably embodied, particularly racial and gendered liberation
theologies. Chapters 2 – 5 historicize the individuals and organizations through which this politics of survivorhood inherited its emphases on “dignity” and “conscience,” and its theology of empowerment through the retrieval of “voice.”

**Counterculture and Counterpublic**

I follow James Fisher in my use of the term “counterculture” to trace the genealogy of the survivor movement. Fisher defines “Catholic counterculture” as the “personalist” spirituality centered on the Mystical Body of Christ, as it was inflected through Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker to Thomas Dooley, Thomas Merton, Jack Kerouac, and perhaps even the Berrigan Brothers, Philip and Daniel. As the politics of survivorhood suggest, victims’ physical abuse is central to the movement’s goals; “counterculture” enables me to contextualize survivors’ conceptions of suffering within American Catholic history. One of the historiographical contributions of this work is that this counterculture has not received sufficient attention within Catholic Studies. Consequently, Fisher’s insistence that this strand of American Catholicism had died was premature.

Fisher’s conception of counterculture required further theoretical refinement to capture the layers of significance in survivors’ everyday rituals. In addition to “counterculture,” I employ the phrase “counterpublic of the betrayed” to analyze how the movement reimagines normative rituals in order put forth an alternative moral framework that challenges the underlying meaning of those core rituals within broader Catholic

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communities. The term “counterpublic” was first coined by Nancy Fraser, who drew on the postcolonial concept of the subaltern in her feminist critique of Jürgen Habermas. I first encountered the term in Charles Hirschkind’s *The Ethical Soundscape.* Hirschkind argues that certain common ritual practices, while pervasive in their influence upon collective and individual processes of religious identity formation, can nevertheless be challenged through innovation within marginalized religious communities. In Hirschkind’s case study, the myriad forms of Islamic call, *da‘wa,* are remastered through the grassroots production of cassette tapes, empowering Islamic subpopulations to challenge the secular rhetoric of the Egyptian state. In combining Hirschkind’s term with “betrayal,” I interpret the liturgical and devotional rituals of the Chicago survivor community as embodied protests of the disenfranchised in the contemporary Church. By harnessing the pain and suffering of their betrayal, survivors embody, in their protests and their voices, an alternative vision of Catholic social justice encapsulated in the “politics of survivorhood.”

Therefore, the term “counterculture” signifies the kinship between my field subjects and a specifically Catholic genealogy, as well as denotes the significance of the grassroots rituals of survivors. For example, when survivors distribute St. Catherine of Siena cards, they are operating both in the Catholic world of Dorothy Day and in the postmodern sense that Hirschkind identifies, where they self-consciously appropriate a church icon in order to contest the hierarchy’s authority.

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Personalism

I use the term “Catholic personalism” to refer to the theology and praxis of social justice promulgated by Dorothy Day’s Catholic Worker movement in the 1930s and 1940s. As James Fisher and others have argued, Day’s particular strand of Catholic personalism had a profound influence on “secular” grassroots activism in the twentieth century, culminating in the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s.23 By linking “personal spirituality to the suprapersonal unity of Catholics within the Mystical Body of Christ,” Catholic Workers created a model for lay activism independent from clerical approval, let alone episcopal supervision.24 This strand of lay empowerment, or “counterculture,” to borrow Fisher’s term, preceded the language and theology of the Second Vatican Council. As Fisher pointed out, “the changes [observed following Vatican II] were actually rooted in three decades of an evolving sensibility that I have called personalism.”25 Day’s program centered on personal responsibility and service to the poor, in which “self-dissolution” became the primary end. She called on Catholics to center their religious devotion to address victims of suffering and to “dissolve the barriers between sufferers just as the distance between Christ and persons were dissolved in the Mystical Body.”26 In their personalist reading of the Mystical Body, early Catholic Workers exceeded the vision of lay participation imagined in that phrase by Pope Pius XI and other theologians. Day offered a radical version and critique of the Mystical Body, which

elevated the oppressed, deemphasized the institutional Church as the heart of the body of Christ, and re-centered salvation around the labor and dignity of those who collectively suffer. Through their social work, protests, and acts of mercy, Day and other Catholic workers sought out scorn, contempt, and humiliation as evidence of their proximity to the suffering Christ. The remnant of activists still involved in the Chicago survivor movement continue, as I explore in Chapter 1, to understand their own persecution through this same lens, as rituals of humility that unite them as the People of God.

Women’s Liturgical Innovation

I use the complementary terms “women’s liturgical innovation” or “Catholic feminism” depending on the historical era. The two terms represent contingent and historically-constrained developments, but they share common lineages and common understandings of “the Mystical Body of Christ” and “the People of God.” In Chapters 2 and 3, I identify and analyze the apostolic succession of female liturgists, through three generations of reformers, in which the broader trajectory of female empowerment is clearly visible from the start. While Catholic personalism (above) also influenced this genealogical strand, particularly in its orientation towards the Mystical Body of Christ, Chicago’s liturgical reformers were, at times, notably less interested in the suffering of the poor than in realizing the potential of social communion, through new rituals that challenged the patriarchal structure of the institutional Church. As a response to a number of social ills brought on by modernity, particularly individualism and consumerism, liturgical reformers of the early twentieth century imagined the liturgy as the ritual site for
creating “a touchstone for reviving a true Catholic spirit, one which would take seriously the implications of the Mystical Body, being formed by liturgical prayer and participation, and bringing this new spirit into the world.” At St. Benet’s Bookstore in Chicago’s downtown “Loop” and St. Procopius Abbey in the nearby suburb of Lisle, female reformers experimented with elements of the Eucharist. Some of their innovations anticipated Vatican II, such as the priest facing the congregation. But not all of these liturgical reformers would have been pleased by other changes of the Second Vatican Council, such as the turn toward the vernacular. Personalism and liturgical reform share important theological connections, particularly concerns for lay participation, social justice, and female spirituality. Indeed, certain individuals – Nina Polcyn and Barbara Blaine, paradigmatically – were at times influenced by these strands of Chicago Catholic Action. This combined lineage of liturgical reform and personalism provides insight into the formation and growth of the Chicago survivor movement. Through this interaction we can observe how personalism has elevated “dignity” and “conscience” within survivor ecclesiology; only through this interaction can we recognize the choreography of Chicago survivor protests as descending from prior generations of liturgical reformers.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1, “The Intimacy of the Streets: Performing Survivorhood at the 2012 Cardinal’s Dinner Protest,” attends ethnographically to the voices of survivors. Through a

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thick description of one event, SNAP and CCC’s joint picketing of the CUA Cardinal’s Dinner black-tie gala, I explore ritual choreography and the “poetics of protest” within the Chicago survivor movement. I analyze survivors’ angry slogans and violent rhetoric, but I also highlight the emotionology of survivor conspiracies, as central to this religious community of the socially and spiritually disenfranchised. Paradoxically, survivors still yearn for emotional and religious contact with their bishops.

The second chapter, “The Genealogy of the Chicago Sexual Abuse Survivor Movement: Personalism and Catholic Action, 1934 – 1978,” is a historical excavation of the people and ideas that contributed to the formation of the Chicago survivor movement. Organizationally, the Chicago survivor movement is descended from the Catholic Worker movement, the Catholic library movement, the liturgical movement, the Cana Conference, the Christian Family Movement, Women’s Ordination Conference, Chicago Catholic Women, and Call to Action. The ecclesiological passions undergirding these movements were transmitted to survivors through the profound influences of Nina Polcyn and Patricia Crowley. My identification of Polcyn’s omission from the subfield of U.S. Catholic history was a significant finding of this research.

Chapter 3, “Feminist Personalism and the Theology of the Disenfranchised: The Women who Founded LINKUP and SNAP, 1978 – 1991,” examines the impact of the “grandmothers” of the Chicago survivor movement. I begin with the contexts through which Polcyn and Crowley shaped Blaine, Steffel, and Miller. The creation and design of SNAP and LINKUP, respectively, reflect in part the parallel (and at times competitive)
spiritual and socioeconomic “bloodlines” that flowed from Polcyn to Blaine, on the one hand, and through Crowley to Steffel, on the other.

In the fourth chapter, I demonstrate that Chicago survivors have foremost desired to have their pain heard and their suffering recognized by the Church (priests, bishops, and fellow parishioners). This chapter, “Finding a Voice: The Need to Be Vocal and the Desire to Be Heard, 1991 – 2002,” demonstrates that the leading Chicago survivors only turned to the civil and criminal lawsuits – and even then often with reluctance or sadness – in the absence of receptive pastoral dialogue, under the direct urging of prominent countercultural priests or in the shadow of fear cast by the financial and political clout of the Church.

In Chapter 5, “Chicago after Boston: Coalition Building and Movement Growth, 2002 – 2012,” I explain historically the dramatic shifts in the topography of the local survivor movement. In the landslide that was the national VOTF movement, LINKUP died and SNAP was reborn. Alternately stated: in response to this second betrayal – the re-victimization of survivors through the Church’s de facto policies of denial, cover-up, and intimidation, not just locally but particularly after the revelations of Boston 2002 – broader coalitions of survivors flocked into the Chicago movement, founding new lay communities and spurring SNAP’s meteoric growth.

Chapter 6, “Survivors’ Saints,” concludes by further excavating the complex and conflicting emotions survivors feel towards priests. I analyze the ways in which survivors have valorized priestly figures as saints. As with the prior five chapters, the devotion of survivors to these living saints, as well as the embodied, if unconscious patriarchal nature
of these saints, calls into question the utility of the common distinction between pre-/post Vatican II Catholics. By analyzing the paradigmatic examples of Fr. Thomas Doyle and Richard Sipe, I explore the ways that survivors have, through the real and imagined lives of these saints, harnessed their counter-memory of suffering in order to produce a discrete agenda of ecclesiastic reform. In Doyle and Sipe, survivors imagine a democratic church in which lay power is sanctified and celebrated, the fields of power of clerical superiority have been erased, priests are encouraged to have sexual relationships through the sacrament of marriage, and these relational reforms ultimately restore the possibility of reciprocal, non-hierarchical intimacy between priests and “the People of God.”
CHAPTER 1

The Intimacy of the Streets: Encountering the Politics of Survivorhood at a Protest

Abstract

Although my fieldwork spanned four years (2011 – 2015), many of the issues that I found most perplexing were initially observed at a protest in April 2012. In beginning with this ethnographic encounter, so late in the history of the Chicago survivor movement, my first goal is to explore in their original context the questions that guided my archival research. My second goal is to use this ethnographic encounter to begin to analyze the politics of survivorhood. The structure of the chapter is modeled after Clifford Geertz’s “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight.” By unpacking the protest’s structural and symbolic meanings, mapping out the culture of Chicago survivorhood and its tensions, and exploring the deepest fears and desires that animate the Chicago survivor movement, this chapter also begins to contextualize the central themes explored in the next five chapters.

My observations immediately place us in the lived religion of today’s Chicago survivor movement. Through protests such as this one, Chicago survivors seek not only to give “voice” to their pain and suffering, but also to lay bare the ecclesiastical culture that rendered children so vulnerable in the hands of priests, and to articulate their ecclesiological vision for the future of the Roman Catholic church. I use “poetics” here to show how, through seemingly “small things” – actions, words, devotional objects – survivors engage in creative theological and ritual action within a distinctively Catholic
framework. To build on the observations of Veena Das, the “transactions between body and language” enable survivors “to both voice and show the hurt done to them, as well as to provide witness to the harm done to the whole social fabric” of American Catholic life.

In doing so, they define and embody a Catholic identity, variously appropriating Catholicism’s idioms, rituals, and material culture. This chapter uses the term “cosmological” to refer to the wider divine and moral frameworks through which this group of survivors constructs the meaning and significance of their protest activities, their relationship to the clerical hierarchy, and their devotional acts. The term signals the ways in which the survivors perceive divine intervention in their efforts to address child sexual abuse, as well as the ways that survivors use various forms of narrative, devotional practice, and contemporary events to produce meaning and to link their religio-political agenda to broader social and religious concerns.

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29 Veena Das, Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 60 – 61. [emphasis original]
This protest also highlights the paradoxical relationship between survivors and clergy and the intimate terms through which survivors lay their suffering and grievances at the feet of their archbishop. On the one hand, the survivor community is frank about its hatred and scorn for the way American bishops have handled the abuse crisis. On the other, Chicago survivors yearn openly for contact with, and acceptance by, Cardinal Francis George and other members of the hierarchy. The chapter’s main argument is that, through these public acts of desire, the survivor community imagines itself into ecclesiological and national discourses on justice. Furthermore, the affective rituals on display at the protest reflect some of the most intimate politics within the survivor movement. The protest thus provides crucial insight into the cultural poetics that animate survivors, highlighting the key ecclesiological and ecclesiastical goals that today’s aging remnant of the Chicago movement still seeks, while emphasizing that the Catholicism these victims desire retains an institutional framework led by bishops and priests.

**The Plan**

In January 2012, the Coalition of Concerned Catholics’ (CCC) regular monthly meeting fell on the day after the passing of Joe Paterno, the Pennsylvania State University head football coach, who was the most widely admired college football coach of his generation. Instead of following their planned agenda, the CCC members spent three hours talking about the scandal that had erupted at Penn State during the previous year. In late 2011, Paterno was dismissed from his position for failing to adequately address allegations
of child abuse against the team’s former defensive coordinator, Jerry Sandusky. CCC members were pleased that Americans were concerned about non-clergy victims, and they were excited by the prospect of reopening public debate over local statutes of limitations. But the *de facto* policy of willful ignorance at Penn State also elicited emotions of guilt and complicity from some survivors. Dean, a former union organizer and machinist from Nebraska, stood up and began to cry. Choking back tears, Dean confessed:

> This is so tough for me. I lived in this world, not knowing anything about the abuses, just praying by myself and happily attending Mass until 2002. Then all of a sudden it shook the very foundations of my being. I mean – Where was I? How could I have been so ignorant? I feel like a European after the Holocaust. Did I know? Could I have known? Or did most of us Catholics simply not want to know what was going on all this time?

In an attempt to reconcile him, his wife stood up and grabbed his arm. “It’s all right, hon. I mean, if we hadn’t been through all we’ve done over the past decade, Penn State would have just been swept under the carpet. All of this happened because of us.” The other CCC members were so moved by this exchange that they decided to use Penn State as the theme for their upcoming protest of the twenty-third annual Catholic University Cardinal’s Dinner, a black tie gala that has raised more than $28 million since its inception. Catholic University markets the event as an opportunity “to honor their Eminences,” and that year’s honorees included four of the most prominent American priests: Archbishop of Chicago Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archbishop

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30 In June 2012, Sandusky was ultimately found guilty on forty-five counts related to the abuse of minors and sentenced to sixty years in prison.
31 *Fieldnotes* 23 January 2012.
32 *Fieldnotes* 23 January 2012.
of Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl, and Archbishop of Boston Cardinal Sean O’Malley.

On the night of the CUA gala, a blustery Friday evening in late April, the CCC organizers were joined by roughly two dozen leaders from Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful (C-VOTF), the Survivor’s Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), and Call to Action (CTA). Rain and sleet pounded the sidewalk as the protesters prepared to greet some of the most powerful Catholic donors in the country. To host their own press conference, the survivors rented out the penthouse President of the United States (POTUS) conference suite at the adjacent Renaissance Blackstone Hotel. It was a luxurious meeting space with multiple rooms, vaulted ceilings, mahogany furnishings, crystal, and modern white leather chairs. Tony struggled to call the protest into order. Neighbors who carpooled together shouted across the tables as though they had not seen each other in years. Survivors were showing off memorabilia they had brought with them, including t-shirts and pins from earlier protests. Nearly everyone was proudly displaying their homemade posters, with a mixture of competition and collective admiration for each other’s artwork. After ten weeks of planning, the group had developed a number of slogans that contrasted Penn State with the Archdiocese of Chicago. Finally, Tony resorted to the military-like demeanor that had made him such a successful foreman. “People, PEOPLE, OK that’s enough now. It’s time to get straight with the Lord and remember that the Holy

34 Fieldnotes 27 April 2012. Except where footnoted otherwise, all of the quotations and descriptions about the Cardinal’s Dinner protest come from this set of notes.
35 Tony and his wife, Doreen, are among the key ethnographic subjects that recur throughout the dissertation. I discuss their religious and social biography in Chapter 5. For the purposes here, it is sufficient to know that Tony and Doreen led the Coalition of Concerned Catholics from 2007 – 2012.
Spirit brought us here. Now, let’s get down to business.” Tony proceeded to bark orders to his lieutenants and to assign specific tasks. “Look at this huge sign the VOTF people brought. We need four of you to hold this banner at the main entrance.”

After fifteen minutes of this adrenaline-boosting racket, the protesters settled down. There were several new faces in the room, including some supporters who had never attended a survivor protest. Tony took the time to acknowledge one such couple in particular, an elderly woman and her blind husband. They had driven two hours to get downtown. When Tony invited them to say a few words, the man said, “We’re glad to be here. We felt we needed to be here, especially for the survivors. But we’re not sure we can hold posters outside – I mean, my wife and I can’t agree on whether or not we’re prepared to get arrested.” This sincere remark provoked an outpouring of laughter from the more experienced supporters. “Arrested? That would be the day! If only we were so lucky! Usually we’re happy if we can just get reporters to take pictures of us.” A few minutes later, Rick led the room in the Lord’s Prayer. Then they hit the streets.

A majority of the fifty-some survivors camped themselves near the intersection of Michigan and Balbo avenues, where their posters elicited the honking of drivers stuck in rush hour traffic. This position allowed the survivors to flag down guests as they exited their taxicabs or walked from the Grant Park garage towards the hotel. In addition to the main pamphlet, a glossy bifold that compared the Archdiocese of Chicago to the Penn State scandal, the protesters were also handing out buttons, survivor scapulars, and St. Catherine of Siena cards. Although many of the CUA guests accepted one or more of these material goods, the men in tuxedos and the women, in their flowing gowns, tended to be
brief and cordial in their interactions with survivors. The protesters had more luck with the taxi drivers and passersby. A smaller group of survivors on Michigan Avenue struck up extended conversations (between 3 and 30 minutes) with a half-dozen Chicagoans walking home from work, all of whom – with the exception of an Italian body builder and a Jewish rabbi – were middle-aged African Americans. While the front entrance was dominated by this sporadic flow, the valet carport on Balbo Avenue was the scene of more antagonistic encounters between survivors and priests.

As the evening wore on, fewer and fewer protesters remained on the sidewalk. By 8 pm, almost everyone had returned to the Blackstone to warm up. I walked back with the last few protesters. When we entered the penthouse conference room, Tony surveyed the situation and announced: “OK, people, I think we’ve done enough tonight. You all look pretty tired and cold, so there’s no sense trying to wait for the dinner to end. Let’s pray together for a while and then go home.” They recited the Hail Mary together, and then Tony asked everyone to go around and share their favorite reactions from the evening. Much of the ensuing hour of communal conversation was characterized by implicit comparisons to their collective experiences as protesters in the 1960s and ‘70s. But the liveliest discussions revolved around the stories of the three survivors who had interacted directly with the prelates. Tony had nearly gotten into a fistfight with New York Cardinal Dolan’s security detail. Separately, an auxiliary bishop had chastised Mary Beth for bringing children’s clothing to the wrong event. The most popular discussion surrounded Bobbie, who had snuck into the dinner itself, been recognized by Cardinal George, and had – based on the room’s overwhelming interest in hearing the story again and again – the
most important interaction of the evening. After an hour of sharing stories and sentiments
like these, Tony offered a homily:

Well, I know not many people from the media showed up. But nevertheless, I think
we can all agree that tonight was a smashing success. It’s amazing to think about
all these stories. There’s something about being out there, standing out there in the
cold and talking to strangers and getting to know them so quickly. We are living
the gospel and sharing our truth. Tonight we were blessed to experience the
intimacy of the streets. That’s why we do these kinds of events. It’s really not for
the media. It’s for us – to share our humanity, to be emotionally naked out there, to
give other survivors the strength and shelter and courage of our testimony.

Everyone stood and joined hands to conclude with the Lord’s Prayer, which the survivors
recited with the opening words, “Our Mother, who art in heaven.” Then everybody slowly
collected their belongings and carpooled back to the suburbs.

Of Catholics and Children (PSU comparisons)

During one of their final planning meetings for the protest, Doreen tried to
summarize why the group had chosen Penn State as a foil for the Archdiocese:

OK, so we’re going to use Penn State to shame them. We’ll make comparisons that
draw the guests’ attention back to the bishops’ failure to address this problem.
We’ll remind them that all of this could have been avoided back in 1985. But
instead of just dialing 9-1-1, our cardinals hid it and covered up again and again.
They’ve wasted billions of dollars that Catholics – Catholics, not the bishops – that
Catholics worked so hard to earn and save up and donate to the Church.36

36 Fieldnotes 20 February 2012. The invocation of “1985” illustrates just how much emphasis
survivors put on the secretly-commissioned report that Doyle, Mouton, and Patterson authored for
the NCCB in the wake of the Gauthe case, as analyzed further in Chapter 6. Throughout my
fieldwork, I learned that the report has taken on a mythical quality among the survivor movement –
it is one of the most common, if not primary, lenses that they invoke in their constant struggle to
Towards this end, the survivors spent the month leading up to the CUA gala designing posters and pamphlets to use at the protest. The most labor-intensive project was the main pamphlet, a glossy, full-color bi-fold that contrasted Cardinal George’s handling of abuse complaints to the swift administrative punishments administered by Penn State’s Board of Trustees. The timeline for Penn State began, “November 7: Penn State’s Board fires two of their Eminences: Head Athletic Director Tim Curly & Sr. Vice President Gary Schultz, for their failure to report allegations of child sexual abuse.” After several interim markers, the timeline concluded, “Today: Concerned citizens across the country demand that politicians pass new laws to help protect children.” Images of a navy pigskin and white-colored football helmet adorned the PSU page, along with the headline, “It took just days to fire everyone.” On the opposing side of the pamphlet, below cartoons of a golden crosier and a cardinal’s miter, the headline read “Years, and still nothing.” The Archdiocese of Chicago page culminated in a series of accusations about George’s mishandling of suspected abusers, the final line of which read, “Tonight: Cardinal George is honored by a University that supposedly cares about children.”

The posters were notably more streamlined, but not necessarily clearer in their message. Rick’s favorite poster depicted a navy-blue field goal on the left and a golden cathedral on the right, with the captions: “Penn State: Protects Children / Our Bishops: Protect Themselves.” Another sign read, “Penn State: Accountable to Civil Law / Catholic Priests: Accountable only to Cardinal Law” The survivors must have been unable to agree to reimagine an alternative past. In this case, the “what if?” that Doreen dreams of is a world in which American bishops had recognized the abuses as a pandemic and began reporting perpetrators to the police.
on the precise wording of certain mottos beforehand, because they carried a number of
variants on a third motif that said, “PSU: Transparency, Firings, Indictment / Bishops:
Secrecy, Promotion, Spin.” These messages were lost on most passersby, who even went
so far as to lean out the windows of their vehicles and yell, “I don’t get it!” In spite of the
confusion several onlookers expressed, the comparison to PSU was not at all lost on the
clergy who arrived in limousines, or at least not the bodyguards who escorted them.

Cardinal Dolan arrived in a motorcade of black sport utility vehicles. He entered
the hotel, and the lead vehicle in his entourage – which bore FBI license plates – parked on
the sidewalk at one side of the valet entrance, effectively blockading the protesters from
the hotel entrance. A bodyguard in tuxedo and yellow bowtie goaded the survivors near
him, yelling, “You’re a bunch of freaks. What are you doing out here? You’re living in the
past! This stuff is old news. It ended 30 years ago. Do you even know when the last abuse
happened?” In an attempt to diffuse the situation, Tony rushed in between the bodyguard
and the other protesters. The bodyguard shoved Tony against the building and yelled, “Go
home, you loser!” Tony was unnerved. I jogged to catch up as he stormed down the street.
“I can’t do this anymore!,” he yelled. “I quit! I’m done!” “Done with what?” I asked.
“Done with all of this,” he said. “I never would have reacted like that back in 2002. I never
would have yelled. This is really wearing on me. I should have turned the other cheek. I
should have tried to engage him in a more peaceful conversation. This is my protest, but
I’m too old and grumpy for this.” After a lap around the hotel, Tony had regained his cool.
The deacon picked up an abandoned Penn State sign and began leading the protesters in
the song, “We Are Called.”
Tony’s argument with the member of Cardinal Dolan’s security detail represents the confrontational and disruptive approach signaled by his use of the term “intimacy of the streets.” He and the other survivors recognized that humiliation and denigration were potential outcomes of their protest. These possibilities became realities with the particularly harsh words of the bodyguard, whose reaction denied the legitimacy of their protest. Yet this encounter did not detract from the protest’s success when seen from the perspective of the “theology of resistance” developed by anti-war Catholic activists in the 1960s and 1970s.\(^{37}\) As one Plowshares activist stated, “Our goal, our purpose, our approach is not primarily to have an effect. It is first of all to be faithful. When you follow the gospel, it’s not in order to be a success. It’s an attempt to be faithful to God, to God’s will for today, to be the voice of conscience.”\(^{38}\) Tony invoked this idea when he said that the protestors succeeded in becoming “emotionally naked” and humble through their protest. Whatever effect their protest had on the broader public or on the CUA gala attendees, they had achieved an essential goal. To be physically present in the public space of the Chicago streets, bearing witness to the crimes of the Church, was a theological end in itself. This idea is also consonant with conceptions of witness enacted by the Berrigan brothers. Jason Bivins explains that witness in that context “… involves placing oneself in a position to declare a truth that one believes has been obscured by worldly power.”\(^{39}\) For survivors and their supporters, declaring their truth publicly constitutes an experiential act


of individual and collective responsibility to give voice to the pain of survivors and their ongoing suffering at the hands of clergy abusers and those bishops who had denied or covered up their crimes. The physical contact and verbal exchange between Tony and the bodyguard represented the protestors’ and survivors’ ongoing vulnerability and sacrifice in the face of cruelty and injustice of the hierarchy.

At the same time, this encounter signaled a profound disjunct between the protestors’ optimistic expectations for a sea change on the heels of the Penn State scandal and the reality that many survivors, not to mention Catholics generally, disagreed with the confrontational approach of these protests. Tony’s statement that “this is for us” sits in tensions with the hope that many survivors held that Penn State potentially constituted a sea change in broader American efforts to address child sexual abuse. The protesters’ invocation of Penn State revealed the ways that the event represented a cosmological turning point. In conversations before and during the protests, CCC members articulated the role of divine intervention in raising the awareness of American society through the PSU scandal, which produced public rage, swift judicial consequences, and institutional reckonings. Moreover, the event reoriented the group’s self-understanding toward being front-and-center in broader national awareness of child sexual abuse. For them, the suffering and injustices of the survivor movement were no longer for naught; rather they were now read as productive sacrifices that paved the way for a national moral crusade in which Catholic survivors were uniquely positioned to contribute and lead.

Elsewhere, other survivor advocates came to imagine and rearticulate the PSU scandal as a major turning point. The same-day convictions, on Friday June 22, 2012, of
Penn State’s Jerry Sandusky and Philadelphia’s Msgr. William Lynn (to date the highest-ranking Catholic official indicted in the U.S.) convinced survivors that their revolution had reached critical mass. When, at the end of July, the Chicago protesters welcomed international guests to Chicago for the annual SNAP conference, survivor-advocates from across the globe boasted about Penn State as a landmark accomplishment. In his opening keynote, Fr. Tom Doyle set the tone for subsequent conference allusions to Paterno and Sandusky:

> Change only happens when the church has to reckon with a force more powerful than itself. And lately, that force is the courts. The indictments at Penn State, as well as the Philadelphia verdict, give us hope that no religious institution – and no god of football – is more important than the protection of children.

Doyle’s easy confidence elicited a thunderous, 90-second applause from the 200-some survivors in the ballroom of the O’Hare Hilton Rosemont.

The next morning, David Clohessy delivered the most personal context for interpreting the significance Penn State represented for many survivors. The St. Louis-based national director of SNAP described how members of the clergy mistreated him. Clohessy relived aloud the personal questions that had been posed during his winter deposition in the trial of Bishop Robert Finn of Missouri. He confessed that he had been

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40 Since 2012, Msgr. Lynn’s conviction has gone through multiple rounds of appeal. In December 2013, the Pennsylvania Superior Court overturned his conviction. Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams appealed the verdict, which was then overturned in May 2015. At the time of writing, Msgr. Lynn is now serving the remainder of his three to six year sentence for child endangerment. Joseph A. Slobodzian, “Judge Orders Msgr. Lynn Back to Prison,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 2 May 2015.

41 Fieldnotes 27 July 2012.
depressed, suicidal at times. Then Clohessy likened his year to musician and civil rights activist Sam Cooke’s experience of 1963, delivering his version of the story behind Cooke’s “A Change is Gonna Come.” Cooke wrote the song, Clohessy reminded the audience, both to mourn the death of his infant and to acknowledge the influx of white activists into his movement. Punctuated by his erratic, sob-filled breaths, Clohessy sang the final verse of the song into the podium microphone:

Oh there ‘been times that I thought I couldn’t last for long
But now I think I’m able to carry on
It’s been a long, a long time coming
But I know, a change gonna come. Oh yes it will.42

The room went still, and Clohessy sat on the edge of the stage. After a minute, he returned to the podium and continued his well-rehearsed speech:

In our movement, a change isn’t gonna come. Because it came already. It’s here. Over the past three months, EVERYTHING has changed. Jerry Sandusky, and three officials at Penn State, and the country’s most beloved football coach – all of these men have been punished for their crimes against children. And all of this happened in a matter of months, not years. It happened because of us. It happened because of you.43

Unlike the rowdy applause that had followed Doyle and Williams’ remarks, the audience seemed more somber. Clohessy’s emotional display of suffering had left the room reflecting on the collective sacrifices that the leaders of the survivor movement had made over the past twenty-five years. The audience hoped that Clohessy’s suffering – much like their own and other survivors’ – would produce significant change.

43 Fieldnotes 29 July 2012.
Reliving the Catholic 60s

At the Cardinal’s Dinner protest, Tony quelled his anger by singing the postconciliar hymn “We Are Called.” At the SNAP conference, Clohessy made peace with his sadness by singing a hymn from a different gospel. In both cases, memories of their earlier activism in the peace and justice movements seemed to ground these leaders in their darkest encounters with the church. Indeed, references to the Civil Rights Movement were ubiquitous throughout my research. At the Cardinal’s Dinner alone, there were at least six other survivors who made explicit what had only been implicit in Tony’s choice of hymn. “We raised some hell out there!” a survivor yelled to the Blackstone concierge staff as they returned to their hotel. In the elevator up to the POTUS room, another exclaimed, “Woohooo! That felt just like the 60s all over again!” And during the hour-long reflection, Joanne said, “With Penn State and Philadelphia and Kansas City, it feels like the winds are blowing again. This is the moment we’ve been waiting for. We need to keep fracturing the bishops’ lies. Let the light of truth pour out.” Joanne’s sermon-like eloquence elicited a Baptist-style “Amen” from several of the Catholic protesters in the conference room. Other survivors wanted to emphasize that the minorities they encountered outside the protest seemed markedly more sympathetic to the pain of survivors than other passersby. One of the more memorable bystanders, Rick reminded the group, was an Indian driver who had turned off his cab to share a cigarette with a few survivors. Just a few puffs into their smokes, the cabbie and the survivors’ conversation drifted naturally toward their shared admiration of MLK Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. Dean added, “I don’t know if any of them were even Catholic, but the African Americans just seemed to understand us. They get it.
There was some sort of connection out there.” Bobbie interrupted him, “Of course. They already lived through this stuff. Blacks know how to fight oppression. They know the pain of exclusion. They see us out there and they remember that we used to hold posters for them.” These comments express other implications of the “intimacy of the streets.” Participants saw themselves in solidarity with city dwellers they imagined as having endured similar experiences of pain and suffering.44

A challenging question is to ask how the survivors in the POTUS room remembered the protests of the 1960s. In follow-up interviews, I learned that some of them had indeed been “rabble rousers” all along. But approximately half of the survivors I spoke with described remorse over not having had been more involved in the cultural revolutions they had already lived through. Because Dean and Joan had spent their pre-retirement years as labor union organizers, I took for granted that their boots must have been “a walking” in their youth. Instead,

Nah, in the 60s we were busy doing what we were doing – having babies, finding work, buying furniture, smoking, being worried about our hair. Climbing the social ladder. And meanwhile there were protesters in Oakland, and at other universities. People yelling in the streets, kids fighting to save their brothers in Vietnam. And we just tuned it out. When I look back, it was such a monstrous injustice, that war. And all the pain and suffering it caused, for both countries. So we were the people in the pews back then. We just went with the flow. We had blinders on. That’s how most Catholics are now – they just don’t want to think about child abuse. They don’t want to deal with it.45

44 Bivins, Fracture of Good Order, 119. The ideology of the Berrigans and the Plowshare movement linked Civil Rights, anti-war protests, and reform of the Church.
45 Interview with the author, 23 October 2012.
At the subsequent protests I observed in 2011 – 2013, Chicago survivors continued to choose songs and prayers that reflected their memories (first- and second-hand) of the protests during their teenage and college years. In addition to other Catholic hymns like “Here I Am Lord,” the music at survivor protests included “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” and verses from “secular” songs such as Bob Dylan’s “Blowing in the Wind” and Simon & Garfunkel’s “Sounds of Silence.” Although the handful of field contacts I asked about these music selections seemed unaware of the fact, this intermixing of sacred and “secular” hymns was uncommon prior to the liturgical changes ushered in by Vatican II. The lived theology of survivors, however, is rarely encountered in such clearly demarcated postconciliar terms.

Retrieving Catholic Tradition: Devotion to Saints Catherine and Francis

The first “handout” that the protesters ran out of was the St. Catherine of Sienna devotional cards that they distributed on Michigan Avenue. Two CCC leaders had spent their own money to procure six hundred of the Italian-made devotional cards, because they thought that it would help survivors “break the ice” with black-tie guests. Unfortunately, the protesters hardly got to test this thesis, because strangers had accepted most of the prayer cards before the bulk of the Cardinal’s Dinner guests began arriving. Nevertheless, it is important to note the care that survivors put into the production and dissemination of each card. On the front was a standard, gold-embossed image of St. Catherine, holding her

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staff-like crucifix. But on the back, the survivors had cut and pasted an alternate prayer over the textual passage that had been printed on each card. The original prayer read:

Most Holy Spirit, source of unity in the Blessed Trinity, through the prayers of St. Catherine, may the Church always be unified in faith and morals under the leadership of the Holy Father, the divinely chosen authority who speaks in the name of Jesus Christ. Who with the Father and the Son lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Over this, the protesters had pasted a prayer that they occasionally recited at the beginning of their monthly meetings, which I later realized was an excerpt from St. Catherine’s letters to Pope Gregory XI:

I tell you in the name of Christ crucified that you must use your authority to do three essential things. You are in charge of the garden of the holy Church. So uproot from the garden the stinking weeds full of impurity and avarice, and bloated with pride: that is, the evil priests and administrators who poison and corrupt the garden. Amen.

When I attended survivor meetings, this prayer always seemed out of place. In addition to being less melodic than the incantation that CCC typically used, the author was clearly both haughty and bitter, two sentiments incongruous with the tone of these meetings in general. Once I learned that the words were attributed to St. Catherine, the prayer made much more sense. Several of the survivors in CCC had personal devotions to Catherine, whom they spoke of as a woman ahead of her time. I came to realize that, for some survivors, Catherine was being imagined as the first female whistleblower. In spite of no evidence (that I know of) that suggests the interpretation, these Chicago survivors are firm

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47 Vida D. Scudder, ed. *Saint Catherine of Siena As Seen in Her Letters* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), 94.
in their conviction that St. Catherine was talking about the sexual abuse of children, and by extension, that if God had listened to Catherine’s pleas, future generations of victims would have been spared the physical pain and spiritual agony of priestly rape.

Although Catherine was beloved by many, far more male and female survivors offered daily supplications to St. Francis.48 In spite of Francis’ overwhelming popularity among U.S. Catholics, the love and affection that survivors displayed towards their statues and prayer cards and even stuffed figures of Francis perplexed me, so I asked a few survivors about their relationship to Francis in my follow-up interviews. They taught me several things I probably should have already known about Francis, like the grace with which he treated women and the fact that he was never ordained a priest. But what survivors love most is that, to them, “Francis was a rabble-rouser.”49 Indeed, CCC members reveled in their efforts to be strategic and precise while, simultaneously, using no-holds-barred tactics and being accountable only to God. “We’re SEAL Team 6!” Jack, a former Naval officer, told me at my first CCC meeting. Sensing my confusion, his wife Bobbie clarified, “He means that we don’t ask anyone’s permission, especially the church’s, before we act on our conscience.” Joan described Francis in precisely the same terms, “He lived the gospel without preaching it. He served the poor. He didn’t give a shit what the bishops told him to do. He just went out and loved.”50 As I inquired more and

48 By my estimate, only 15 – 20% of the members of the Chicago survivor movement are of primarily Italian dissent. So I’m not sure whether it would be insightful to analyze the local community’s adoration of Catherine and Francis (patron Saints of Italy) in national or ethnic terms. Perhaps this is more an issue of the pervasive legacy of Italian Catholicism on American Catholic life.

49 Interview with the author, 2 Feb 2012.

50 Interview with the author, 8 Jul 2014.
more about the past of various CCC members, I learned that many of them used to volunteer in other arms of the church. Joan used to volunteer five days a week at a Catholic Worker house in Lincoln.

But nothing prepared me for St. Francis’s centrality in Tony and Doreen’s life. The first time I interviewed the couple, we met at a dingy, urban diner called the “Sunshine Café.” After talking for about half an hour, I naïvely asked one of my earliest interview questions: “Why did you join the survivor movement?” “St. Francis,” Doreen told me. Puzzled, I gently asked if she could tell me more. Two hours later, I had learned that their family interpreted their life story through the lens of what “St. Frank” had wanted them to do. “I love to volunteer,” Doreen explained,

But one day – this was thirty years ago, when we were living in Dallas – one day, I was really tempted to take a job. We were behind on our rent, and three young kids, and we just all felt like it was an opportunity that I couldn’t pass up. But I’d been picketing all year at the dental clinic, which wasn’t honoring its duty to care for migrant workers, and this was August, and the negotiations at the clinic were about to fall apart. I knew I couldn’t do both. So I put on my Francis tape, and listened to my favorite song, “Go Rebuild the Temple,” again and again. And then I went outside to garden, and I was weeding, picking out all the bad stuff from the garden. When I stood up to take a break, a blackbird came, flew from out of nowhere, and landed on my shoulder. I started crying. And I put out my arm and the bird climbed down to my hand. And I just started weeping. It was so clear. That was my sign. Go rebuild the temple. So I listened to Frank, called up the job and told them I couldn’t take it. And I drove to the dental clinic that afternoon, and never looked back.  

Every time Tony got a job that required the family to move, they interpreted it as a sign from Francis. “My job was at American Airlines, and then at Marriott, but Doreen was doing the important work. She did what I couldn’t. I paid the bills, and she paid God,”

51 Interview with the author, 8 August 2013.
Tony explained. When they moved to Baltimore, Frank told them that Doreen was needed at a local battered women’s shelter. In Immokalee, Florida – an impoverished and unincorporated town, situated between Naples and Cape Coral – Francis called Doreen to found a soup kitchen for new immigrants. “Every place we’d go, Francis was in charge,” she told me. Theirs was the Frank, I realized, whom Harvey Cox celebrated in *Feast of Fools,* “There is no reason why those who celebrate life cannot also be committed to fundamental social change. And world-changers need not be joyless and ascetic. St. Francis, the most life-affirming of the Christian Saints, was a revolutionary at heart.”

The second time I met with Tony and Doreen, I went to their house. I was certain they would mention Francis, but I didn’t think I had anything else to learn about their relationship with him. I was wrong. For a couple that is so openly progressive in their orientation towards issues like the female priesthood, I was surprised when they revealed that they had more than one statue of the Saint in every room of the house. I was even more shocked when – in the middle of a conversation about their parish – Doreen glanced at a corner of the room and whispered several sentences to Francis, only to return, seamlessly, to our conversation, as though “Frank” was one of us, sitting in an invisible chair at the edge of the room.

At this point, I realized that I still failed to grasp St. Francis’ role in bringing them to the survivor movement. “Was it what Francis asked of you when you moved back to Chicago?” I asked. “No,” Doreen said, shaking and beginning to cry. Their nephew had

been abused when they lived in Tucson, AZ. The abuser was the same bishop who had ordained Tony into the deaconate, just nine months prior. And the abuse had occurred in the priest’s house, which was only two doors down from Tony and Doreen’s home. It happened right under their noses, under their watch, probably while Doreen was volunteering somewhere around town. As a couple, Tony and Doreen interpreted their nephew’s pain as their second “big sign” from Francis:

That’s the thing with Frank. Go rebuild my temple can mean a lot of things. Francis took it literally for most of his life. And we did too — you know, follow Frank, wipe butts and feed mouths and work with the poor. That’s all we thought it meant. But then we learned that the temple is so much larger. The sex abuse just hit us, and then we couldn’t just do the easy things anymore. It’s like when Francis went to Rome and walked up to the Pope and demanded the creation of the Franciscans. Rebuilding the temple — survivors are the biggest part. The whole moral integrity of the hierarchy is gone. The only way that the church can survive — for people like your son, and his kids — is if we rebuild it from the ground up. We are the people in the pews. Francis got sick of the institution. He knew the right message, the thing the bishops need to learn now. God is not about me; He’s about you. To understand is to be understood. That’s the approach the bishops need to take with survivors. They need to listen.\(^{53}\)

A few minutes later, Tony added, “Social justice, that’s the literal Francis, and that’s way fun. Church justice, it sucks, but that’s why we’re still alive.”\(^{54}\) For some members of the Chicago survivor movement, at least, the saints are still really real, as active participants in altering the moral landscape of the Church and the United States through survivor advocacy.\(^{55}\)

\(^{53}\) Interview with the author, 8 August 2013.
\(^{54}\) Interview with the author 8 August 2013.
\(^{55}\) I explore survivors’ constructions of sainthood in Chapter 6.
J’accuse: The Bishops Are to Blame

In contrast to moments of cross-cultural harmony experienced by the protesters who had camped out on Michigan Avenue, the survivors who picketed the carport on Balbo Avenue weathered some intensely negative encounters with clergy. Among the limousines, Mercedes sedans, and Porsche sport utility vehicles, there were several Hondas and Fords. At these arriving vehicles, one SNAP survivor led the group in an angry chant, the chorus of which professed, “Don’t believe their lies! Stop supporting the bishops! Don’t believe their lies! These men are criminals!” As the protesters shouted, a late-model Dodge minivan filled with collared clergy approached slowly; as the minivan entered the carport, a priest in the front passenger seat stuck out his tongue and flicked off the protesters with his middle finger. Upon receiving this gesture, a middle-aged protester dropped her sign, crumbled to the ground, and began to cry. Two other women huddled around her and, realizing that emotions were only escalating, decided to escort her back to the conference room in the Blackstone.

A few minutes later, with much less fanfare, Cardinal George arrived in the back seat of a silver Cadillac sedan. As his vehicle cautiously approached the protesters, he made eye contact. With a gentle smile, George waved silently at the group of survivors holding the big VOTF sign. But after George entered the hotel, an auxiliary bishop who had arrived in the same Cadillac scolded the survivors, shouting, “You ought to be standing outside of an abortion clinic.” Mary Beth snapped back, “Why do you only care about children before they’re born?” This startled the bishop, who approached her and asked why she was carrying a pair of little girls’ dress shoes. Maggie explained that they
were her niece’s first communion shoes – the ones she was wearing when she was molested by their priest. He apologized, and the two of them walked together, pacing up and down Balbo Avenue, for nearly a half hour. At the end of their conversation, the two stood in front of the other protesters and hugged. Mary Beth later described it as her “most sincere experience” of the sacrament of reconciliation.56

A few posters made no reference to Penn State. For example, a college-aged CTA leader had scribed her message onto the back of a cardboard box: “Dear cardinals: reform yourselves first; leave the nuns alone.” Another woman carried a white banner printed with black text: “Through your fault, Through your fault, Through *YOUR* most egregious fault.” The protester who designed the banner was, of course, playing off of recent revisions made to the standard liturgy in most English-speaking U.S. parishes. The newer, revised translation of the Confiteor begins “I confess to Almighty God,” and is generally recited during the Penitential Rite. Where American parishioners had grown accustomed to saying, “I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words,” the revised Roman Missal now instructs them to confess a lengthier version that rearticulates the formerly communal nature of sin as a distinctly individual turn away from God. This survivor had modified the new version, “I have sinned through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault,” to reflect her conviction that the hierarchy has never confessed to its role in the abuse scandal. Although feelings of resentment are common among victims of any sexual abuse, this group of Catholic survivors’ obsession with highlighting the bishops’ hypocrisy reveals the extent to which they continue to use and

56 Interview with the author, 16 May 2013.
embody Catholic idioms and practices to express that resentment. An integral part of every survivor protest, in other words, is that they are protesting the failure of clergy, especially cardinals and bishops, to reflect the distinctly-Catholic “emotionology” of confession. According to John Corrigan, the term refers to “the rules of emotional expression and concealment that are coded in the social frameworks for everyday life.”

Survivor protests embody a Catholic emotionology that confirms their ongoing commitment to the Church while also criticizing what they see as an immoral or insufficient emotional response on the part of bishops and priests.

In drawing on John D. Corrigan’s notion of “emotionology,” I am suggesting that one of the most animating desires within the Chicago survivor movement is simply to witness in their highest priests evidence of the specific religious emotions the church expects of them when they enter the confessional. The failure of prelates to meet this most basic of victims’ needs has created a spiritual void for some survivors and is a central dividing line between those who continue to identify themselves as Roman Catholic and the survivors who insist on saying they are “spiritual but not religious.” Not only have the clergy harmed survivors physically, emotionally, and spiritually, but they also have failed to express the proper emotions of a penitent publically. As Corrigan theorizes, understanding emotion and religion requires “making distinctions between emotional life as commanded by the culture and rebellion against that authority by individuals or groups.”

for whom the canopy of emotionology no longer provides order and meaning.” 58 Thus when survivors shout at bishops, instead of kneeling before them, they are no more breaking Catholic norms than when the bishops dispassionately “apologize” for the sexual abuse scandal. Here, the survivors are far from revolutionary. Their emotionology reveals a deeply held pre-conciliar Catholic idiom through which they vociferously express pain and anger. At the protest, survivors want church leaders to conform to the “rules” of emotionology that they continue to hold. Instead of flat apologies, this group of survivors desire embodied displays of pious repentance. They want Cardinal Dolan to weep, as Dean did during the CCC meeting as he expressed remorse and responsibility for the suffering of survivors. When Mary Beth brings her niece’s shoes to a protest, she wants Cardinal George to collapse to his knees, much in the way that her friend collapsed when the minivan priest directed the profane gesture at her. For these survivors, the proper emotional disposition of the clergy toward survivors should be one of penitence, in which the authority roles are inverted. The priest becomes the penitent and the survivor becomes the priest. The survivors’ posters that redirect the Confiteor to “your grievous fault” expresses this wish for priests to not just admit fault, but to embody the ritualized expression of that fault. Due to their suffering, survivors ought to serve as the confessors.

Survivor emotionology further points to the ongoing importance of suffering and pain for some American Catholics. To understand survivors, it is helpful to remember that U.S. laypersons spent much of the twentieth century trying to prove their loyalty to the American state. Everyday Catholics had first row seats in “the engagement between the

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world’s most powerful nation and the world’s most important global institution.”

Within this context, laypersons reinterpreted their firsthand experiences of persecution as part of a deeper, alternate civic history in which Catholics were the founders and first martyrs of the Americas. The feeling of persecution bonded immigrant parishes, allowing laypersons to locate their pain within a much broader American cosmology. Immigrants located their intimate experience in direct relation to the blood of the cross, traced back through the sacrifices of American martyrs and missionaries, to devotional shrines of the old world, to the communion of saints, and most importantly to Christ. This cosmology not only helped them make sense of their place within the new world, it enabled immigrant Catholics to claim a heroic role within American society. A passage from the recent volume *Catholics in the American Century* summarizes this alternative cosmology:

> The divergence in Catholic memory from the story that underwrites the American Century originates in profoundly discrepant constructions of Catholic experience. Catholics came to the New World not to be liberated from the past in order to make a new and more perfect community that would be a light to the rest of the world, but to suffer and die in the cruel northern forests and scorched southern deserts at the hands of ‘savages’ whom they loved even as they were tortured and mutilated by them. The main themes of American Catholic sacred memory have to do with persecution, pain, and sacrifice… For Catholics, pain and death, in all their terrible abundance in the settlements, were not judgments but testing and proof, as well as evidence of God’s love.

By uplifting their religion’s role in sending the first explorers and missionaries to North America, early twentieth-century laypersons used their cosmology of pain and suffering to

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challenge the presumption that the United States is intrinsically Protestant. In other words, pain allowed Catholic citizens to lay claim to an alternate conception of modernity.

Survivors challenge the extant consensus among scholars that suffering is no longer a significant aspect of the American Catholic experience. According to this latter narrative, as ethnic enclaves gave way to middle-class suburban parishes after World War II, Catholics of European descent gained access to non-Catholic universities, became integral to the white collar workforce, and even rose to the highest ranks of American politics. By the time of John F. Kennedy Jr.’s election, and certainly by the end of Vatican II, white Catholics looked and behaved much like their Protestant counterparts. Jay Dolan described the corresponding shift in Catholic prayer as a direct result of no longer needing a cosmology of persecution: “Devotional Catholicism thus emerged at a specific time in the history of American Catholicism, and it suited the needs of an immigrant church very well. As time passed, Catholics distanced themselves from their European immigrant heritage. They sought a style of prayer and worship more in tune with the American environment.”

Dolan is acutely aware that this account neglects the experience of non-white Catholics, particularly Latino/a immigrants (who now comprise more than thirty percent of U.S. laypersons). The extant narrative also omits the experience of some “successful” Catholics in white suburban parishes, whose suffering has been excised from our celebratory narratives of postconciliar progress.

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Throughout this dynamic history – from colonial missions, to nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigration, to de facto assimilation after World War II – Catholic laypersons were among the chief proponents of American religious liberty. Indeed, it is difficult to overstate just how much this facet of the survivor movement goes against the historiography of American Catholicism. This is not to say that Catholics have always been protected by the separation of Church and State, which is more of a constitutional ideal than a lived reality. As Martha Nussbaum notes, “anti-Catholicism is the ugliest blot on our national commitment to religious fairness.”\(^63\) Similarly, Winnifred Sullivan has argued that the post-9/11 alliance between government agencies and Protestant nonprofits “is a formation of the secular, deeply stained by anti-Catholicism.”\(^64\) Survivors are aware that their use of the courts is unconventional. During one of the planning meetings for the Cardinal’s Dinner protest, Tony said, “Maybe we don’t want to separate church and state. I don’t. What I want is everyone to be accountable to the same law.”\(^65\)

Tony’s comment highlights two common sentiments among survivors. The first common concern is that clergy have received special treatment from Chicago area law enforcement (similar to the way Jeanne Miller described her attempts to report her son’s abuse to the Arlington Heights police). The second concern is that the First Amendment has provided a degree of legal protection for U.S. bishops who failed to remove abusive priests from their flock. Indeed, several of the survivors I interviewed spoke passionately

\(^{65}\) Fieldnotes 12 March 2012.
about how the establishment and free exercise clauses have protected cardinals and bishops. Jeff Anderson, a prominent survivor attorney, echoed that sentiment, saying that his decision to represent survivors was influenced by the shift signaled by the famous 1990 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Employment Division v. Smith*. In Anderson’s view, *Smith* suggested that it might be possible to convict any bishops who have knowingly “employed” one or more predatory priests. In spite of Anderson’s optimism, he has been unsuccessful in his attempts to convict an archdiocesan official in criminal court.

The stories that today’s adult survivors tell themselves are constructed upon a scaffolding of a Catholic memory and emotion that was engrained in them as children, even as their new identity is explicitly in tension with the American bishops. Through a dynamic interplay of suffering and memory, sexual abuse survivors have created an alternate vision of Catholic moral distinctiveness. To date, scholars have treated survivor lawsuits as an inevitable response to the abuse crisis; there was money to be had, they reason, and so of course survivors and their families chose to sue the Church. One implication of this approach is that it has obscured the religious practices that survivors have retained, perpetuating the misperception that survivors have entirely abandoned their faith. Many survivors have actually remained faithful to much of the devotional culture that they grew up with, including celebrating Mass. Media images show angry survivors holding signs and bullhorns outside of Cathedrals, but scholars and journalists have failed to notice how many of those protesters had rosaries in their pockets and scapulars in their pockets.

66 Interview with the author, 12 August 2012.
purses. By assuming that it is quintessentially modern for Americans to seek moral justice through the secular courts, we are overlooking the possibility that these Americans are modern in a different way. We have, in short, hastily fit Catholic abuse survivors into a Protestant model of redemption.

**Vengeance, Spoken Softly**

Given the depth of these survivors’ emotionology, it is remarkable that the protests of the Chicago survivor community are overwhelmingly peaceful, at least in their outward ritual performance. Yet the specific forms of protest constitute a form of counter-violence. Survivors often bring photographs of themselves as children, or objects associated with childhood, such as shoes or toys. These objects symbolically mark the violence done to them as children, disrupting the present in which they carry out peaceful acts of carrying signs and singing, with the past crimes and violence of clerical abusers.

At other times, survivor conversations sometimes revolved around the desire for vengeance and the possibility of violence. The penthouse POTUS suite was actually the protesters' second choice for a pressroom. During the months leading up to the Cardinal's Dinner, they had fantasized about renting another space in the Renaissance Hotel, the "Barbershop" meeting room. Due to the popularity of the Barbershop, the hotel catering executive was not able to offer them a discount on the space, whereas she reduced the rate by 80% for the POTUS room, putting it just within reach of their budget. The Barbershop had a few logistical advantages over the POTUS room: the Barbershop was on the first floor instead of the thirtieth, it was more down-to-earth, and it was much closer to the
sidewalk where they expected to greet reporters. But the real allure of the Barbershop was that it is rumored to have been a favorite hangout of Al Capone, and it was the room used for one of the most gruesome scenes in the 1987 film “The Untouchables.” The Blackstone advertises itself as the site of the first “Crime Convention,” convened in 1931 by Charles “Lucky” Luciano to carve up the city’s crime territories with the mob bosses.68

To the CCC organizers, that kind of local lore made the space emotionally powerful. Tony addressed the protest planning committee, saying, “These cardinals are a bunch of high-rolling criminals. If we can rent that room for our press conference, it will show them we’re serious and tough and unwilling to compromise.”69

In this brief reimagining of an iconic space, the survivors were envisioning themselves into the city’s most fabled struggle between good and evil, justice and sin. Given the mix of ethnic identities in the room, at least some of the protesters must have been picturing themselves as Sean Connery or Tony Garcia. But Tony remarks that he’s partial to “the Kevin Costner character” (Eliot Ness).

As his wife, Doreen, recounted their conversations with the catering staff they had met at the Blackstone – a middle-aged African American woman, who apparently said she was “on your side” and offered the elderly Catholic couple a steep discount on the published rate the hotel charges to rent the Capone space – Tony must have sensed that some of the survivors in the room were having difficulty remembering the relevant scene from the film The Untouchables. “You know, it’s a classy space, like a smaller version of that ballroom where De Niro hosted the dinner with the baseball bat,” Tony clarified.

68 Mobster Package flier, Renaissance Blackstone Hotel, Summer 2013.
69 Fieldnotes 23 January 2012.
Given that Tony was captivated by – and presumed that all the survivors could envision – the room “with the baseball bat,” it is worth revisiting Hollywood’s depiction of that space. Shot in the Crystal Ballroom of the Blackstone Hotel, it is the most brutal scene in the film. De Niro (Capone) has convened a black-tie meeting of the Chicago bosses. With dessert plates and giant sniffs of brandy in front of them, the bosses look up as De Niro gives a speech about baseball, a thinly-veiled metaphor about the transgressions of a “player” who has forgotten his place in the “team” by trying to go it alone. Circling the dining room, De Niro pauses behind one of his bosses, who – cigar in hand – promptly has his head smashed in by De Niro’s bat, his brain splattering the white on the other bosses’ tuxedos.

Although the survivors at the meeting only talked about the film for five or ten more minutes, Tony’s invocation of the baseball bat scene points to a less spoken, more visceral impulse among the Chicago survivor community, who occasionally fantasize about inflicting upon their bishops and cardinals the same level of physical violation and pain that child victims must have felt. In the rare moments that survivors vocalized such sentiments in my presence, they generally focused their anger at a current bishop, rather than the abusing priest. “Sometimes, I just want to punch him in the face,” was a common refrain among survivors when they disapproved of a recent statement Cardinal George had made. More than once, I heard variants of “what a relief” it is to know that the Cardinal has such a robust security detail, “because, who knows, some day someone might try to unload a shotgun into his chest.”

70 Fieldnotes 23 January 2012.
Perhaps as the Chicago survivor population ages, these violent fantasies are becoming less frequent, or at least less spoken, as they seem to have been more common in the earlier years of the movement. The “only entirely fictitious” part of *Assault on Innocence*, Jeanne Miller told me, “is the ending.” Miller referred to one of the shortest chapters in her book. And it’s not *entirely* fictional. At the start of chapter 41, Miller fantasizes about reliving her visit with Cardinal Bernardin – the one her real-life family demanded as the main condition of their settlement with the archdiocese. Miller’s character, “Meredith,” feeds the Cardinal a line that is so concise it’s hard to imagine that she said it to Bernardin in real life. Miller did in fact repeat the statement throughout her career at LINKUP, “If any one of them [bishops] somewhere along the way had just asked, ‘How’s your son?’ much of what happened could have been avoided.” After the cardinal’s mansion, the scene shifts to the abused son in the book, “Frankie,” whose gets dumped by his girlfriend when she hears rumors from the other girls at school. “How does it feel to be fucked by a priest, huh Frankie? ... You’re disgusting.” In an effort to capitalize on the boy’s loneliness, his abuser telephones Frankie, ostensibly to cheer the boy up. But Miller’s “son” catches a slip in the priests’ voice, and realizes that his abuser was the source of the rumors at school. Furious, Frankie “went to his parents’ bedroom and pulled open the nightstand drawer. He snapped a cartridge into his father’s .22 caliber pistol and left the house.”

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71 Interview with the author, 20 Aug 2014.
73 Stiles, *Assault on Innocence*, 299.
74 Stiles, *Assault on Innocence*, 300.
“Raised his arm in line with the two figures under the cover in the bed before him. Slowly, surely, he pressed the trigger. A sharp report echoed through the cosmos.” With that sentence, Miller’s otherwise nightmarish fantasy ends.

As I will discuss further in Chapter 4, the “Black Collar Crimes” section (which comprised nearly half of the pages in LINKUP’s monthly publication The Missing Link) printed recent accusations of clerical abuse, often clipped verbatim from national newspapers. The companion section to “Black Collar Crimes” was called “Crimes Against Clergy,” which was usually printed on the back cover of each Missing Link. The “Crimes against Clergy” articles implied that the pain and suffering of individual survivors might be alleviated by the collective knowledge that, in the end, some abusive priests “get what they deserve.” A few short excerpts from the column demonstrate that, for survivors at least, vengeance was always the presumed motive when a priest was harmed. “The nude corpse of a priest retired due to sexual misconduct allegations was found at the Valle Grande on May 4, with blunt force wounds to the head,” started one headline. Another began, “New Orleans: Fr. Ramon Martinez’s body was found in a blood-soaked room at the Holiday Inn Chateau LeMoyne; he had been stabbed at least 20 times.” Some of these accounts were even from international news agencies, such as the story of a Cambodian priest who had drunk communion wine laced with a mysterious poison. Other stories seemed to revel in the inability of police to determine a motive, or even to discern when a priest was lying to

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75 Stiles, Assault on Innocence, 300.
76 Fieldnotes 18 Oct 2013.
77 The Missing Link, Spring 1998.
78 Missing Link, Summer 1998.
79 Missing Link, Summer 1998.
cover up the crime they were being attacked for that had motivated their attack on them, as in:

WARREN, OHIO: A priest who claimed he wounded himself in a botched suicide attempt... was discovered, with bottles of hydrogen peroxide, Advil, and dish soap near his body, 21 hours after he supposedly began stabbing himself. Some of his 88 wounds were superficial, but others were deep and very near his heart.80

“The “Crimes Against Clergy” column thus operated around two assumptions: (i) Any violent crime against a priest for which law enforcement knew of no motive must have been because that priest was a sex offender; (ii) The suspects who attacked these priests were sexual abuse victims who needed the movement’s emotional, if not legal, support. A few survivors I met with had saved “Crimes Against Clergy” pages without preserving the full edition of the newsletter they appeared in. Taken alongside the conspiracy theories that permeate the survivor movement (discussed later in this chapter), these clippings suggest that it was not uncommon for survivors to share cathartic fantasies of violence against priests and bishops. More recently, the Very Reverend Jay Nelson, a New Mexico-based author who co-edited the Missing Link and was ordained in 1991 as a priest in the Catholic Apostolic Church of Antioch, announced on a blog post that he returns annually to the tombstone of the priest who molested him, so that he can urinate on his abuser’s grave.81

80 Missing Link, Spring 1998, emphasis original.
One of the Cardinal’s Men

The survivors at the Cardinal’s Dinner protest received much less media coverage than they had anticipated. The bitterly cold winds and hail no doubt dis-incentivized some of the local news teams, who had orally promised the CCC leaders that they were going to send a camera crew to the Hilton.\(^2\) Insecure about this low media turnout, the survivors at the protest became, as the evening wore on, increasingly sensitive to the cameras and microphones that they did see. In particular, there was a “strange man” who had spent twenty minutes observing the protest, from the safe confines of an adjacent median on Michigan Avenue. The male appeared caucasian, in his mid- to late-thirties, with well-coifed hair, in dress-casual attire. Although separated from the protesters by oncoming traffic, the man was clearly interested in the protest. The entire time he was there, he held up his smartphone and pointed it at the group on Michigan Avenue, slowly panning the crowd as though he was recording video footage of the event. At first, I presumed that he was recording the black-tie guests, but – as Jack was quick to point out to me – the man never pointed his camera at the carport where the limousines and taxicabs were arriving.

When Rick crossed the street and approached the man, he “escaped” onto his bicycle and pedaled hurriedly up Michigan Avenue. Perhaps the onlooker had just realized, I thought to myself, that he was late for a Friday night date. Or maybe he was a blogger who routinely recorded protests around the city. It also occurred to me that he could be a business traveler trying to sneak in some tourist sights; maybe he was interested in the

\(^2\) Although the protest was referred to on the nightly news, none of the survivors’ signage or PSU slogans ever made it to broadcast or newsprint.
Hilton Conrad because it was, infamously, the location of the violent, nationally-broadcast protests of the 1968 Democratic National Convention. As these scenarios were crossing my mind, Rick stood on the median waiting for a break in traffic so that he could cross back over the busy street. But before Rick returned, the four survivors closest to me had already made up their mind: the onlooker’s sudden departure confirmed that, “he was a spy.”

One week later, I drove to Rick’s two-flat apartment to get his perspective on the protest. He was still on edge. Before I could even begin my audio recorder, Rick pointed out that there was a bicyclist who had, since my arrival, ridden around the block four or five times. I looked out the window and watched the biker carefully. He wore a chic pair of black skinny jeans, a messenger bag slung across his shoulder, and a helmet, and he was considerably younger than the onlooker who had “fled” when Rick crossed Michigan Avenue. Rick likewise acknowledged that the two men bore little resemblance, but as the cyclist took out his iPhone and pedaled the block once more, Rick’s blood pressure shot up. “I knew it!” he exclaimed, oxygen-tank in hand, “That’s another one. He’s one of the cardinal’s men.” Alert but not alarmed, I suggested, “No, no. He’s probably just a bike courier who can’t find the address he’s looking for. Maybe he wants a video to show his boss that the address he was sent to doesn’t exist on this street.” Rick replied, in a very

83 Fieldnotes 22 March 2012.
84 Fieldnotes 2 May 2012.
calm and certain tone, “No, George somehow found out I was meeting you today. You better watch yourself and make sure nobody follows you home.”

As this note from the CUA protest suggests, the Chicago survivor community sometimes vocalizes conspiracy thinking in order to explain uncomfortable situations in everyday life, such as a late-night caller who silently terminates their telephone call without identifying himself. Even though I shared none of the fear that he felt, Rick’s sincere concern for me was touching. This otherwise inconsequential, casual exchange was the tenth or eleventh time, at that point in my fieldwork, that one or more survivors had verbalized their fear of surveillance. In addition to those intimate concerns, survivors had told me stories – often as a group, at their monthly meetings – that included a who’s-who of U.S. Catholic politicians who were working, with the Vatican, to keep a Roman vault of Nazi plunder hidden from European governments; rumors surrounding Pope Benedict’s sexuality; incredibly-detailed “knowledge” about the so-called “gay lobby” within the Holy See; and – most commonly – stories of secret Papal letters that documented child abuse as far back as the second century C.E. In this section, I explore how some Chicago survivors use conspiracism to make sense of their past abuse and to voice their fear of being intimidated, in a way re-violated, by surveillance. Conspiracy knowledge allows survivors to communicate intimate desires and fears. Lastly, I reflect on the very real dangers this vulnerable population faces and highlight the potential harm scholars can inflict by labeling subjects paranoid or conspiratorial.

85 Fieldnotes 2 May 2012.
As I have already noted, more than 90% of the Chicago survivor movement’s members were in high school or college during the 1960s. This generational trend is important because most scholars of conspiracy and popular culture argue that the 1960s represented a cultural turning point for conspiracism in the U.S. According to this common analysis, Americans that came of age during the 1960s were the first generation “willing to admit that abuses of power and privilege were not only possible but perhaps the norm.” This cultural shift was the culmination of a growing national fascination with espionage, beginning with Soviet competition and the Cold War, expanding alongside the assassinations of John F. Kennedy Jr. and Martin Luther King Jr., and becoming second nature after the Watergate scandal. I might also note that the Chicago abuse survivor movement became a national force during the 1990s, which is the decade that most theorists have pointed to as the all-time summit of this pop-cultural American fascination with conspiracism.

In trying to make sense of these stories, I encountered three obstacles. First, abuse survivors have in fact been the subjects of a far-reaching conspiracy: namely, the systemic cover-up of abuse cases from the 1950s to the 1990s, including the silencing of child victims and the intimidation of would-be whistleblowers. Victims of priestly sexual abuse often feel that their entire church has betrayed them. In addition to their sexual and

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spiritual trauma as children, survivors feel threatened well into adulthood by the new dangers attached to the prospect of voicing their suffering. When they decide to speak out, survivors risk public anger, defamation, familial rejection, by defense lawyers’ efforts to impeach them, and even investigatory surveillance. Even scholars not trained in the study of religion have been hesitant to apply the label “conspiracy theorist” to Catholic subjects. “When we have seen the Catholic Church itself vary on a decades-long far-reaching conspiracy to cover up the crimes of child abuse,” writes Donovan, “even the most rococo of conspiracy theories no longer seems that absurd.”88 Second, these conspiracy narratives harness a trove of historically anti-Catholic tropes. Salacious stories of monastic orgies and accusations of Vatican conspiracies have circulated within American culture since the eighteenth century. It is nonetheless peculiar to hear these tropes recirculating within the halls of Catholic parishes, where survivors discuss Vatican “plots” against them as a very real, intimate threat to their movement. Third, survivor narratives do not fit neatly into either of the two conventional frameworks we have for analyzing conspiracism and religion. Within American religious history, conspiracy narratives appear most often as a footnote in studies of either (a) evangelical apocalypticism or (b) the persecution of immigrant minorities. To apply our understanding of conspiracy theorizing to survivors, I propose that we think of conspiracy as a communally productive, meaning-making ritual.89 Conspiracism as a speech act inherently creates selfhood and communal identity.

88 Donovan, Conspiracy Films, 10.
89 Some of the most beloved theorists of religion have, in a sense, regarded religion itself as an intrinsically conspiratorial human institution. Devotees of Nietzsche and Marx have built an extensive corpus within Religious Studies around the theory, essentially, that religious rituals
Some of the conspiratorial plots that survivors find meaningful invoke a liminal, transnational imagination of the Vatican as both the epicenter of Roman Catholicism and a secretive, wholly foreign entity. For example, many survivors believe that the Vatican actively tries to mask its real wealth, and that there are one or more secret vaults containing riches of gold, Renaissance art, and Nazi plunder. While we might be tempted to dismiss such folklore, this incredible accusation mirrors survivors’ personal frustration over the levels of deception that have been used to shield diocesan finances. In the wake of credible allegations of sex abuse, American bishops often claimed that their dioceses could not afford to reimburse survivors for psychological medical treatment. Since 2002, multiple archdioceses have declared bankruptcy after transferring their financial assets into separate nonprofit entities, such as Catholic schools or cemeteries. The secret treasure theory has also helped survivors defend themselves from what they have recounted as the accusations of fellow Chicago parishioners, who have occasionally blamed abuse lawsuits for the unprecedented number of recent parish closures.

A second example. Last spring, survivors elaborated on the rumors that Pope Benedict XVI is retiring because of his own homosexuality. Within this framework, they imagine multiple scenarios for the ways that then-Cardinal Ratzinger deceived other bishops as he rose to power, the various staff members who covered-up relationships with him over the past forty years, and the secret financial resources Benedict must have tapped to silence extortionists. Survivors fluently interweave these “new details” into older

represent the most successful conspiracy of all time – namely, the subversion of large populations for the economic and ideological profit of a small elite. Although evocative, that is not the strand of analysis that I am going to pursue here.
narratives, including the mystery of Marcial Maciel, the founder of the Legion of Christ, who remained a favorite of Pope John Paul II long after he was exposed as a child predator. Some survivors believe that Maciel must have had knowledge of Ratzinger’s homosexuality and used it as blackmail during the Cardinal’s tenure as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.

The stories today’s survivors tell about Maciel bear hallmarks of an earlier narrative, alluded to in several issues of VOCAL’s newsletter, wherein Tom Economus was purported to have been approached by Andrew Cunanan during his survivor-missionary work in Long Beach, CA. According to Economus, Cunanan said that he had incriminating information about Cardinal Bernardin’s leadership of a homosexual sex ring. (Economus was openly gay, muddling an already-complicated instance of what we might otherwise interpret as homophobia.) Infamously, Cunanan went on to murder fashion mogul Gianni Versace, who was also openly gay, later that summer in South Beach, Miami, Florida. From the time of Versace’s death until Bernardin’s own passing, some members of VOCAL energetically toiled to amass documentation that would allow the broader U.S. public to “connect the dots” between Cunanan, Cardinal Bernardin, and this purported secret culture of homosexuality.90

The issue of priestly homosexuality has heightened significance for those survivors who attribute a portion of their suffering to what they believe is a widespread, secret sexual culture within the priesthood. While many survivors actually support LGBTQ rights, they are infuriated by the prospect that pedophile priests might have harnessed homosexuality

to silence other priests, who were often the only witnesses to their crimes. This fear comes from stories in which a pedophile priest was identified as abusive by his peers but never outing as such, because the abuser used his knowledge of their sexual activity with adult men or women as blackmail. In this way, some priests were tacitly allowed to keep abusing children because the only clerics who knew of their pedophilia wanted to protect their own sexual secrets. Some survivors thus link their childhood suffering to the (rumored) sexual orientation of the church’s highest priest.

These two broad conspiracy narratives – secret Vatican treasures and cover-ups to protect the sexual orientation of high-ranking prelates – both contribute to a cosmology that relocates survivors’ individual suffering within an intentional, global framework. “The conspiracy theorists’ worldview is,” Michael Barkun argues, “ultimately reassuring, for it promises a world that is meaningful rather than arbitrary. Not only are events nonrandom, but [they define] a clear enemy against which to struggle, endowing life with purpose.”⁹¹ Similarly, in his study of conspiratorial cinema, Barna Donovan describes the meaningful, holistic worldview that conspiracies intrinsically create:

At heart, the conspiracy theorist is a supreme optimist. The order of the world is intrinsically good. Human nature is also good, it is born innocent, it is decent, peaceful, and altruistic. Disorder, aggression, hatred, and greed are not naturally occurring… To completely discount a conspiracy is to acknowledge a frightening chaos, to admit that there is absolutely no value and no cause for fortune and misfortune, pain and suffering… Conspiracy theories assure us that all the trouble, trauma, disorder, and tragedies of the world couldn’t possibly come from the incompetence of people in positions of power, clueless stupidity, or blind

⁹¹ Barkun, *Culture of Conspiracy*, 4.
ideological commitment at the extent of common sense.\textsuperscript{92}

Although Donovan calls this optimism “naïve” and treats it as a purely secular artifact, this worldview is indebted to the theological tradition of natural law. Indeed, the concept of a well-ordered moral universe holds particular religious significance for the leaders of the survivor movement, all of whom were educated in Catholic schools during the 1960s, when Neo-Thomism pervaded nearly every aspect of the parochial curriculum.\textsuperscript{93} In this well-ordered moral universe, priests who committed abuse and the hierarchs who covered up the abuses, would be brought to justice, both in this world and the next. This group of survivors thus works to facilitate the end result that they believe is already divinely ordained.

Likewise, survivors’ conspiracy theories participate in a broader U.S. Catholic eschatology of suffering and persecution, in which individual suffering is seen in relation to Christ’s crucifixion.\textsuperscript{94} These conspiracy narratives thus build upon a much broader Catholic worldview that posits both individual and communal victimization within the divine struggle between good and evil. While I am arguing that there is something distinctively Catholic about the way these survivors locate their individual suffering by deducing from the global to the local, from transnational to intimate, we also must

\textsuperscript{92} Donovan, \textit{Conspiracy Films}, 6 – 7.


recognize that the stark delimitation between good and evil is a hallmark of conspiracy thinking more generally. As Barkun observes, “The essence of conspiracy [theories is their] attempt to delineate and explain evil.”\textsuperscript{95} Global conspiracy narratives are one way survivors reframe their abuse within broader struggles to reform the Roman Catholic church.

By sharing theories of Vatican conspiracies with one another, the survivor community is also able to give shape to their ongoing fears, the most common of which is the paranoia that their everyday conversations are being monitored. After all, “Conspiracy theories are, ultimately, about fear.”\textsuperscript{96} Although I am about to present evidence that it may be objectively warranted for survivors to continue to fear the church \textit{in the present}, I am more interested in the phenomenology of conspiracy thinking within the survivor movement. Distinguishing between rumor and reality, conspiracy and corporeality, is not the primary aim. As Veena Das has argued, “Rumor occupies a region of language with the potential to make us experience events by producing them in the very act of telling.”\textsuperscript{97} In other words, these stories are part of the narrative scaffolding through which survivors create their understanding of community and selfhood. Conspiracies construct survivors’ identities, enabling them to at once to distance themselves from the hierarchy that they believe monitors and undermines their activities, while affirming the desire to be heard and seen by those same authorities. These narratives cement the ties among this particular

\textsuperscript{95} Barkun, \textit{Culture of Conspiracy}, 30.
\textsuperscript{96} Donovan, \textit{Conspiracy Films}, 2.
\textsuperscript{97} Das, \textit{Life and Words}, 117.
group of survivors, who share this particular critique of Church authority and an approach to addressing its moral failings.

Describing her fears of diocesan surveillance, Joanne said: “It feels like I’m being re-violated all over again, like I’m still a little girl who isn’t safe even when I’m in my own home.” Diocesan administrators and prominent laypersons occasionally reinforce such fears. The first keynote address at last year’s SNAP conference was delivered by Tom Doyle, a Dominican priest who gave up his post at the Vatican embassy in 1985 to become a whistleblower. A few paragraphs into his prepared remarks, Doyle paused and interrupted himself. “Oops, I almost forgot – before we go any further, I made these special signs.” He held up two pieces of flimsy white cardboard with the words “Reserved for Bill’s boys” scrawled in black permanent marker. Most attendees got the joke, and the audience erupted in laughter. Doyle was referencing a recent comment by William Donahue, current President of the Catholic League, a nonprofit dedicated to denouncing what they perceive as a widespread anti-Catholicism among mainstream American media.

A few months before the conference, Donahue and SNAP’s national director, David Clohessy, had clashed in the pages of the New York Times. In response to Donahue’s subsequent allegations against Clohessy, SNAP purchased a full-page advertisement in the Times. Donahue responded in characteristic form with a timely press release, in which he claimed to have had informants spying on the 2011 SNAP conference.

98 Fieldnotes 5 May 2013.
Don’t let SNAP’s ad fool you. While they purport to be concerned with the safety of children, their real agenda is to sunder the Catholic Church. Last year its annual conference turned into a Church-bashing event. How do we know this? We had trusted sources attend and fill us in on the rhetoric [click here to see our report]…

So why would anyone believe what Clohessy is bandying about in today’s Times?  

Doyle walked down the stage and theatrically taped the signs onto a section of chairs.

“There,” he said, “the Church has been spying on us for twenty years, so now I’m reserving them these front-row seats.” Doyle’s theatrical acknowledgement of this public media exchange represents more than just a fear of surveillance. It also represents the common insecurity among Chicago survivors about whether their movement has actually changed the church. These narratives of surveillance may be reassuring to survivors because they suggest that the hierarchy is listening in on their conversations, even if bishops do not publically endorse the movement’s reform agenda.

I do not know whether the Catholic League or the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has actually tried to infiltrate organizations like SNAP. Survivors might well experience such forms of surveillance. Which brings me to a note of caution. The presumption that conspiracy theories are necessarily false comes more from the pejorative status we bring to that term than from the elements that define it as a scholarly category. Mark Fenster foregrounded this fact in his now-classic study of conspiracy narratives.

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102 Fieldnotes, SNAP annual conference, Chicago, IL, 27 July 2012.
“The label conspiracy theorist,” Fenster writes, insinuates that a person is extreme, threatening, nuts.”\textsuperscript{103} More recently, Jack Bratich eloquently added,

> The question, ‘What is a conspiracy theory?’ presupposes a stable subject and assumes our term is merely descriptive. For some reason, when it comes to [the term] ‘conspiracy theory’ many semiotically savvy analysts adhere to a reflectionist model of language… But let us not deceive ourselves in thinking that it is simply a neutral descriptor. We know it is a term of derision, disqualification, and dismissal.\textsuperscript{104}

For my purposes, a conspiracy theory need not be wholly false, nor wholly true. These are communally-shared narratives, and what I have been most interested in are the aspects of American Catholicism that enable such stories to be plausible within this sub-community of laypersons, as well the meaning-making capacities of conspiracism more generally.

Conspiracy narratives speak important, as well as complex and problematic, truths. These stories enable survivors to enunciate a lived experience of pain, anger, and fear that would otherwise go unspoken and unheard. As we saw in chapter 2, voice is central to the construction of survivorhood, especially speaking uncomfortable truths to clerical power and the desire to have their experiences recognized. Moreover, conspiracy theories tell stories of hierarchical hypocrisy and misused authority. At various points, cardinals and bishops have put pressure on members of the survivor community and monitored their activities.\textsuperscript{105} For survivors, these activities, and the narratives they tell about them, expose

\textsuperscript{103} Fenster, \textit{Conspiracy Theories}, 1.


the darker side of clerical authority and its denial of the moral crimes perpetuated against survivors.

Conspiracism within the survivor movement thus provides a shared language for locating personal suffering within a broader cosmological framework and for voicing communal insecurities without explicitly naming them. This understanding of conspiracy exceeds narrow definitions of that term. To borrow again from Fenster, “A relatively small population of Americans believes that a grand conspiracy theory is the causal engine of history, while a much larger portion of the public engages in conspiracy theory at some level, as a potential explanation for events in their own lives.”

Many survivors will trace the root of their childhood suffering all the way up to the Pope. But I never heard them claim that the Vatican was responsible, for example, for instigating conflict in the Middle East or for engineering the recent financial crisis. Indeed, what I find so fascinating about survivor conspiracy narratives is that they always come back to the trauma these victims suffered as children or to their everyday struggles as activists. This suggests studying conspiracy narratives as a form of religious narrative that orients individuals and communities within their religious and social worlds.

**Ballroom Play**

At the planning meetings leading up to the Cardinal’s Dinner protest, the CCC members decided that they should “dress their best” in an effort to “blend in” with the

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106 Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories*, 1-2.
formally clad guests. While no one opposed the suggestion, in practice, it underscored the stark economic diversity present in the Chicago community. For example, while only two survivor-advocates owned tuxedos, most of the men wore suits to the protest, with the exception of two males whose dressiest clothing was a sweater. The dresses and business suits worn by most of the female protesters were unspoken reminders of the social and class disparities at play within the Chicago survivor movement. The exception was Bobbie who, in spite of living in a thoroughly middle-class household, had found a modest, if dated, three-quarters length ballroom gown to wear. When they were planning the protest, Bobbie was one of the survivors who had argued for picketing the Cardinal’s dinner, instead of the Mass that was scheduled to commemorate the event at Holy Name Cathedral. The Mass would have certainly been more convenient; most of the survivors are retired or semi-retired, and the liturgy began at 4:00 p.m. that Friday afternoon. “But I’m tired of protesting outside the Cathedral,” Bobbie told her CCC friends, “We always used to hold press conferences there for SNAP, but it became predictable and people started to think of us as angry victims who no longer belonged in the church.” The issue turned into an animated debate. Dean countered, “But we usually get more press coverage at the Cathedral.” Ultimately, Tony explained to me after the meeting, “I decided to support the dinner idea, because Rick and Bobbie were passionate about being seen and heard by the black-tie guests, not just another blurb on the nightly news.”

107 Fieldnotes 26 March 2012.
108 Fieldnotes 26 March 2012.
109 Fieldnotes 26 March 2012.
110 Fieldnotes 26 March 2012.
In Bed With the Cardinal

As I mentioned earlier, Bobbie’s story about confronting Cardinal George inside the Catholic University gala had become the centerpiece not only of the hour-long reflections the protesters shared in the Blackstone conference room, but also of the narratives that a broader community of survivor-reformers circulated in the weeks following the CUA protest. To more fully flesh out the emotions at play in these (re)imaginings of Bobbie’s experience, I now turn to an even larger protest, held at the Cardinal’s mansion the following month, by an even larger coalition of survivor-advocates. By analyzing just one aspect of this second protest, we can begin to appreciate the paradoxical intermingling, within the Chicago survivor community, of fantasy and faith, persecution and belonging, anger and intimacy.

Three weeks after the Hilton protest, this time on an unseasonably warm evening, I attended another protest that was co-organized by the same four organizations (CCC, SNAP, CTA, and C-VOTF). Roughly half of the Cardinal’s Dinner protesters were among the crowd of 150 lay reformers who had assembled for this event. But this time, instead of holding inflammatory signs and shouting accusations at prominent bishops, the activists staged “a candlelight vigil” at Holy Name Cathedral. The protest marked the start of a one-month national campaign called “Nun Justice,” a series of events praying against the Doctrine of the Congregation of Faith’s investigation into the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. First, the vigilers gathered on the front steps of Holy Name Cathedral. Television and documentary film crews were also present. Then a woman priest gave a short homily and led the group in singing “We are Called.” After the hymn, they began to
light candles and communal remembrances. As they passed the flame to their neighbors, the survivors offered the name of a nun who had changed their life. “For sister Rita, who taught me how to read,” “Pray for Us.” “For Sister Mary Catherine, who showed me what it meant to believe,” “Pray for us.” “For Sister Joan Chittister, she is a beacon of hope,” “Pray for us.” “In this fashion, for fifteen minutes, individuals offered up their prayers and remembrances of women religious, until the female priest concluded, “Dear Sisters, please pray for us as we pray for you. Amen.” After every candle had been lit, a nun banged a gong forty four times, once, she said, for every 1,000 sisters who belonged to LCWR. The group processed around the exterior of Holy Name Cathedral, singing abbreviated renditions of the hymns “Here I am Lord,” and “If You Believe and I Believe.” Then they marched more than a mile along crowded State Street, through the heart of Chicago’s Gold Coast dining scene.

Like other devotional processions, the survivors’ journey ended at a sacred place, Cardinal George’s mansion, where they sang for another thirty minutes while waiting for George to come outside and acknowledge them. The Cardinal eventually sent a private security guard to retrieve the flowers, letters, and jumbo-sized petition they had carried along the procession. After their devotional objects had been accepted, the protesters lit sparklers and sang “This Little Light of Mine.” Immediately after the song was finished, two protesters exclaimed that they had seen Cardinal George look out at them “from his bedroom window.”¹¹¹ This remark caught the imagination of the other protesters, who had lively discussions about how overjoyed they were that they “had been seen” by their

¹¹¹ Fieldnotes 8 May 2012.
cardinal. As they walked back down State Street, the group expressed the importance of the cardinal’s gaze. Even if they did not receive any news coverage, the group agreed, the very fact that Cardinal George had “made eye contact” made the protest an immediate “success.” As I met with these protestors over the following weeks, I noted sixteen separate survivor-advocates claimed that they too had seen George look out from his bedroom that evening. Furthermore, survivors who were not even at the protest all included that element in their description of what they had heard about the evening.

There is a lot at play here, including play itself. In both Rick and Bobbie’s case, there was a desire not only to be heard by the church, but also literally to be seen by their archbishop. In the time since Jeanne Miller’s 1991 conference, being seen has become increasingly important to survivors. Indeed, the Chicago survivor community seems to have developed an abundant range of ways to imagine clerical intimacy from the curb. In tandem with CCC and SNAP members’ shared affinity for St. Francis, this intermingling of fantasy and activism reminds me of Cox’s now-classic thesis, “Real celebration, rather than a retreat from the reality of injustice and evil, occurs most authentically where these negative realities are recognized and tackled.”

Saying Something of Survivor Theology

Survivors publically demonstrate their suffering in an effort to make sense of the scandal and, more intimately, their physical and spiritual pain. As Das elaborates, when “one’s way of being with-others was brutally damaged, then the past enters the present not

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112 Cox, _Feast of Fools_, 28.
necessarily as traumatic memory but as poisonous knowledge [that] can be engaged only through a knowing by suffering.”

By displaying pictures of themselves as children, and in carrying relics from the time period during which they or their loved ones were abused, Chicago survivors are not only mourning the event of sexual abuse; they are mourning the loss of the Catholicism they once knew. They are mourning the loss of certainty, of absolute faith, less in the hierarchy’s accountability (which has long been a contentious issue in American Catholicism). At the same time, they appropriate productively Catholic rituals, devotions, and emotional displays that comprised their preconciliar, pre-abused youth, in order to call for the accountability of the hierarchy and to find spiritual meaning in their experiences of suffering, pain, and anger.

The “politics” of the Chicago survivor movement are thus inextricably linked to the poetics of their affective displays. Their yearning for ecclesiological change is no less embodied than the physical pain they felt as youths. In dialogue with these notes from the Cardinal’s Dinner protest, Chapter 6 uplifts the theological and ecclesiological implications of this survivor imaginary. As we shall see, many members of the Chicago survivor community are willing “to forgive” the individual priests who molested them or their loved one. They are adamantly opposed, however, to considering “the whole person”

113 Das, Life and Words, 76.
114 Although I use it sparingly, this phrase – survivor imaginary – is adapted, more or less directly, from Robert Orsi’s career-long theorization of what Andrew Greeley first termed “the Catholic imaginary.” See, for example, Robert Orsi, Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds that People Make and the Scholars who Study Them (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005; “U.S. Catholics Between Memory and Modernity,” 11 - 42. Other works that have appropriated this concept include Paula Kane, Sister Thorn: and Catholic Mysticism in Modern American (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); John C. Seitz, No Closure: Catholic Practice and Boston’s Parish Shutdowns (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).
when it comes to their bishops and cardinals, instead judging these prelates based on the intentionality of their decision to protect priests instead of kids.

**Conclusion: Questions Raised by this Ethnographic Encounter**

The 2012 Cardinal’s Dinner protest provides profound insights into the latest phase of the Chicago survivor movement. Today’s survivors imagine and articulate their suffering within the much broader framework of national child sexual abuse awareness. Chicago survivors draw heavily on their memories of the 1960s in the planning and performance of their public actions. They harness prayers and devotional objects in their efforts to connect with other laypersons. Paradoxically, survivors lay their pain at the feet of the country’s bishops and cardinals, on the one hand, while yearning openly to restore a level of intimacy with the city’s prelates, on the other. The emotional depth of this paradoxical relationship is evident in the enduring threats, real and imagined, to survivors’ everyday lives; the role of conspiracism within the local movement; this community’s affinity for violent fantasies of revenge; and survivors’ communal desire to be seen, heard, and even touched by their cardinal.

While we should appreciate the cohesiveness of the CCC, SNAP, and former LINKUP members who participated in this protest, we must also remember that this is but a snapshot – and a very late one at that – taken from just one evening in the history of a movement that has now existed for nearly thirty years. The Chicago survivor movement of 2012 is not identical to that of the 1980s, 1990s, or early 2000s. Of the women who founded the survivor movement, only Barbara Blaine was still active at the time of this
protest (which she attended, but was not involved in organizing). As I have tried to emphasize, the choreography of this 2012 protest was laden with survivors’ experiences of a past that I can only read and hear about. The way that today’s survivors speak about their healing has been deeply influenced by their experiences in therapy. The lay population that comprises American Catholicism in 2012 has been dramatically reshaped from the demographics of the church within which these survivors were children. Even the Church, for which change is notoriously slow, has experienced an overwhelming set of changes since the formation of LINKUP in 1991 and, more visibly within the national context, since the crisis of Boston, 2002.

In beginning with this snapshot from 2012, my goal is not to undermine the dynamic narrative of how the survivor movement has changed over time. Rather, the point has been to draw readers’ attention to the world of survivors as I first encountered it and, most importantly, to articulate with methodological integrity the context through which I came to ask the questions that guided the next three years of my ethnographic and archival research.

Another goal of this chapter has been to challenge assumptions that readers may hold about the culture of survivorhood. Within the U.S. news media, survivors have been typecast as: angry and damaged individuals; anti-Catholic; completely distant from the prayers, songs, and devotions of their youth; a subset of the “Catholic Left”; and archetypical of the liberal interpretation of Vatican II theology. The following chapters confront all of these stereotypes in greater detail. But above all, the question that guided my research after this 2012 ethnographic encounter was simply, Where did today’s culture
of survivorhood come from? In other words, how and why did this remnant organize and perform this protest in precisely this way?

Most pressing was my interest in parsing the influence of the Second Vatican Council on the ecclesiological and ecclesiastical agenda of the Chicago survivor movement. This 2012 protest erased any doubt in my mind as to whether the survivor movement had remained distinctively Catholic. So after this ethnographic encounter, the framing and methodology of my project shifted from whether this community was Catholic (as I explained it in the Introduction) to, Which strands of American Catholicism gave birth to, and made possible, this survivor community in front of me today? Ironically, in other words, the most intense experience from my ethnographic work challenged me to rethink this entire project in more historical terms.

Looking back, there were at least two reasons why I situated Vatican II at the forefront of the project’s historical reframing. First, the Catholic sixties has been the predominant framework through which extent studies of contemporary American Catholicism have been approached. According to this almost hegemonic narrative framework within the study of Catholicism in the U.S., the twentieth-century church was ruptured and irreparably changed by the cumulative foment of Vatican II (1962 – 1965), Humanae Vitae (1968), and the revolutionary racial, economic, and gender changes witnessed more broadly throughout the decade in American society. Media and intellectual presumptions that clergy sexual abuse survivors were paradigmatic of the so-called “Catholic Left” should have placed the Chicago survivor movement squarely on the side of post-Vatican II American Catholic culture. But within that framework, there is little room
for the patriarchal, hierarchical structure of authority within survivor organizations, let alone the devotional objects, prayers, and rituals on display at the 2012 protest. The Chicago survivor movement was a community, it struck me immediately after this protest, which did not fit neatly into any of the analytical categories produced by our historical fascination with Vatican II; demographically they spanned both “pre-“ and “post-“ Vatican II Catholics, their politics was not strictly “liberal” or “conservative,” and their explicit reflections on the Second Vatican Council did not map onto our division between laypersons who regarded the Council as a “renewal” and those who had experienced it as a “revolution.”

Secondly, 2012 marked what we might later recognize as a watershed moment within a decades-long disciplinary fascination with Vatican II. Across the country, universities hosted hundreds of special talks, events, and even entire conferences commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the council. That anniversary, conceived broadly, overlapped precisely with the three years following this protest (2012 – 2015), and as I write this there is yet another anniversary event being hosted at John Carroll University, the campus I have taught on for the past two years. While I strived to keep abreast this enormous, ongoing discourse, one event forged a particularly large influence on my framing of this research: the Lived History of Vatican II project, co-sponsored by Northwestern University and the University of Notre Dame. The principal investigators of this three-year project were Robert A. Orsi, Kathleen Sprows Cummings, and Timothy

Matovina. With great foresight, these three historians designed the project as an interdisciplinary exploration of the way Vatican II had been experienced “on the ground” in various locales across the globe. I had the privilege of attending both the first two, closed-door annual meetings attended by all of the researchers involved, as well as the third, public, conference hosted by the Cushwa Center in 2014. While the Lived History of Vatican II project clearly grew out of the growing consensus that we ought begin to study Vatican II as an event, the question those sessions raised for me was actually whether Vatican II had been nearly as influential on the founders of the survivor movement as I had, de facto, presumed it to have been.

The following five chapters take up this question implicitly in their chronological historicization of the genealogy, birth, and growth of the Chicago survivor movement. I will return to this question explicitly in the conclusion, where I analyze the extent to which the Second Vatican Council has influenced survivors’ political, theological, and ecclesiastical agendas.
Swerving and Spinning

Our vehicle swerved through the blizzard. Barbara Blaine was behind the wheel; she had suggested the trip as a way for me to learn more about SNAP. Our destination was Springfield, where the following day Blaine had scheduled appointments for us to lobby Senate judiciary committee members to propose legislation that would abolish Illinois’s statutes of limitations on crimes of child sexual abuse. A few minutes into our interview, we were interrupted by the loud ring of Blaine’s cell phone. She put the call on speaker, said “Hi Jason!,” then turned to me and asked, “So Brian, who do you think the new Pope will be?” I bumbled out a few obvious possibilities, then self-consciously apologized that I really wasn’t all that riveted by news of the impending enclave. Undeterred by my ignorance, the caller, Jason Berry, and Blaine proceeded to have an impassioned debate over the merits of each papal candidate. Berry, a Louisiana native and one of the first

116 This periodization corresponds to major events in the lives of the two women at the center of the survivor movement’s lineage: Nina Polcyn and Patty Crowley. Polcyn first met Day in 1934, and closed St. Benet’s in 1973. Crowley began her own ministry with Pat in 1942, and her trajectory as a lay apostle shifted dramatically after Pat died in 1974 and Patty shifted her lay mission to the Women’s Ordination Conference in 1975 and Call to Action in 1978. I initially attempted to subsume Polcyn and Crowley’s accomplishments within my historicization of their contact with the founders of the survivor movement. But the dearth of secondary literature on St. Benet’s and Call to Action rendered those efforts futile, creating chapters within chapters instead of (as I have chosen here) a genealogical analysis organized chronologically, which fits within the broader historical organization of the dissertation as a whole.

117 Fieldnotes 26 April 2013.
journalists to report on clergy abuse in the 1980s, was calling from Washington Dulles
airport, en route to Rome to cover the enclave for the ABC News. After another twenty
minutes of mutual speculation, Blaine told Berry that she needed to get off the phone so
that she could concentrate on the icy roads, which were getting worse as we crawled
southward. Without missing a beat, Blaine resumed the interview I had been conducting
before the phone call. “So, we were talking about my background before SNAP. You know
Nina Polcyn Moore, right? She was really the one who taught me how to be Catholic.”
Blaine’s tone was clear and sincere, tears forming in the corner of eyes. “She stood up for
women. And especially for survivors.” Blaine went on to talk about Polcyn’s passion for
prayer and intellectual thought, what a blessing St. Benet’s bookstore had been to the city’s
Catholic culture, and how enjoyable it was to engage Polcyn in theological debates.

At this point in the interview, my head was spinning. The woman sitting behind the
steering wheel bore remarkably little resemblance to the Blaine I had heard and read about.
In my prior interviews, local survivors had described Blaine as “a firebrand” who is
“fiercely protective of the survivor movement.” Likewise, journalists have, since the
1990s, routinely cast Blaine as an angry, heavyset survivor who seemingly always has a
megaphone in her hand. The woman sitting next to me was gentle, fit, and soft-spoken,
and her professional demeanor reminded me of a corporate executive. Most puzzling of all
was this Catholic bookstore that Blaine would not stop talking about.

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118 See for example Arthur Jones, “As Scandal Keeps Growing, Who is Accountable?” *National
Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church,” *Toledo City Paper*, 29 April 2004; Michael Miller,
“Lawsuits Filed in Peoria Against Priests Accused of Sexual Abuse,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, 30
November 2005.
When Blaine first mentioned Polcyn, I was dismissive. In her interviews with news media, Blaine had earned a reputation for being obfuscatory and confrontational, and I had every reason to suspect that all this talk about some Catholic bookstore was a red herring. Nevertheless, I became curious about Polcyn. I put out feelers to my classmates, my dissertation committee members, and – somewhat in desperation – to an entire e-mail list server of young historians of American Catholicism. Nothing. Not one person recognized the name. Then I turned to the internet, where I found several obituaries for Nina Polcyn Moore, one newspaper article, and – most helpfully – a hit to the University of Notre Dame Archives, which houses a small collection of Polcyn’s papers. So I traveled from Cleveland to South Bend to find Polcyn. I was astonished. I could not believe so little had been written about this leader of the lay apostolate. Nina’s closest friends included Dorothy Day, Baroness Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Bishop Bernard J. Sheil, Msgr. Jack Egan, and Jacques Maritain. Polcyn, I slowly learned, was an essential member of the Catholic Worker and Friendship House movements; a lay leader of the Catholic Youth Organization and the Cana Conference; an oblate of Saint Benedict; an internationally renowned figure in the American liturgical movement; and – foremost – the manager and later owner, from 1943 to 1973, of the central terminal for Chicago Catholic activism, St. Benet’s Bookstore. Subsequent research trips would take me to the other Polcyn papers,

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119 This is all the more astonishing in retrospect, because four members of that digital community have written books that are intimately linked with the genealogy I am about to unravel. Their recent books deal, respectively, with Dorothy Day’s mysticism, the lived history of the Christian Family Movement, preconciliar women’s movements, and liturgical architecture.
which are scattered across Marquette University, the Chicago Historical Society, and Loyola University of Chicago. The information in these archives was fascinating.

But I still suspected that Blaine was trying to throw me a curve ball. My head stopped spinning in early 2015, on an archival trip to Notre Dame. It wasn’t my time that day in the archives that cleared things up, but rather a meal at the South Bend Catholic Worker. I had been invited by a colleague to the weekly Wednesday night community meal at the St. Joseph’s Street men’s house. We brought potato salad to share. After dinner, I helped bus plates and then started washing dishes. After a few minutes of silent labor, a large hand grasped my shoulder. I turned to see Chris, a 41-year old volunteer whom I had just met thirty minutes earlier. In spite of my jitters, he warmly offered to help, and I begrudgingly accepted. Then came the conversation I had hoped to avoid. Chris asked me, “So, why are you in South Bend,” and wouldn’t take my immediate reply, “to visit the archives,” for an answer. So I started talking to him about this quest to learn about Nina Polcyn. To my shock, Chris had heard of her. A few minutes later, Chris produced an old e-mail that he had received from another Worker. It was dated February 10, 2007. This collision of worlds left me dumbstruck – not because Chris had heard of Polcyn, but because of what I learned from the e-mail, which read:

Nina Polcyn Moore, Catholic Worker pioneer and friend to many in Chicagoland, went joyfully to God about 4:00 this morning, February 10. Polcyn, who was one of Dorothy Day’s earliest friends and co-founder of Holy Family House, the first Milwaukee CW, is remembered by many in Chicago for her years of work at St. Benet’s Bookstore downtown. Father Bob prayed with her yesterday afternoon at the home of her sister Helen Heyerman. Polcyn’s dearest friends Barbara Blaine

120 “Chris” is a pseudonym.
and Dr. Peter were with her until the end, with the rosary as they prayed a litany of all she would be joining in our great cloud of witnesses. “All is well. All manner of things will be well.” The funeral mass will be at Sheil Center at 11:00 on Sat, February 24.\textsuperscript{121}

In that moment, I realized that Blaine had been telling me about her life. She was just doing it the way any humble, shy person might, by emphasizing the woman who had, in Blaine’s words, “taught me how to be Catholic.”\textsuperscript{122} So I returned to Polcyn’s archives with new eyes, and as I delved deeper into St. Benet’s forgotten past, I discovered the matrilineage that enabled the Chicago survivor movement.

The body of this chapter is divided into two sections. (I) I analyze the forgotten history of Nina Polcyn and St. Benet’s bookstore. It would be much more convenient to cite a biography of Polcyn, but there is no academic literature to cite. I only learned of this influential reformer through interviews and archives. We cannot understand the shape of today’s survivor movement without at least a cursory understanding of Polcyn’s leadership of the Catholic Worker and the Chicago liturgical movement. (II) The second section examines critical details from a parallel strain of Catholic Action, Patrick and Patty Crowley’s Christian Family Movement. Although the broad narrative of CFM is widely-known, the particularities of its founding have not been analyzed historically, and it is those particulars that inform this case study of the survivor movement.

\textsuperscript{121} Fieldnotes 25 April 2015.
\textsuperscript{122} Barbara Blaine, interview with the author 23 April 2013.
I. Nina Polcyn: Worker, Reformer, Librarian, and Liturgist

The genealogy of the Chicago survivor movement starts with the forgotten history of Nina Polcyn. In 1914, Polcyn was born into a lower-class immigrant household in the “Polonia” district of Milwaukee. Her mother worked as a grocery clerk, her father, as a railway switchman. Reflecting on her youth, Polcyn credited her parents for teaching her “the Corporal Works of Mercy,” particularly through her mother’s example of “feeding the homeless who came to our door.” Polcyn’s fondest memories of her father were the passionate lectures he gave her at the dinner table, frequently invoking Eugene Debs and Pope Leo XIII in the same breath. Polcyn’s parents, insistent that their daughters overcome the stigma of being Eastern European immigrants, sent the girls to Mass at St. Matthew’s, a respected Irish parish. Her summer camp pastor at St. Matthew’s, Fr. Ryan, was an early advocate of the Catholic Worker, and he purchased 400 copies of each issue to distribute to the school children, asking them to read the newspaper to their parents.

Polcyn paid her own tuition to attend a Catholic high school, with the money she earned from the overnight cleaning shift at a local German bakery. By taking additional jobs, she also paid for her tuition at Marquette University, where she majored in journalism. An insatiable intellect, Polcyn took evening religious education classes as part of the Catholic Instruction League at St. Matthew’s, where she met Fr. Franklyn Kennedy, who was then a graduate student at Marquette and editor of the diocesan newspaper. In

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125 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
1934, when Polcyn heard that Dorothy planned to visit Chicago, she and Kennedy persuaded the university to invite Dorothy Day to speak to the journalism students.  

**Dorothy Day’s Closest Friend**

When Day came to Marquette in 1935, she stayed with Polcyn’s family. Over the week, the two women began to forge a friendship that would last until Dorothy’s death in 1980. The journalists who later wrote about Polcyn were quick to label this meeting as the moment that made her “a disciple of Dorothy Day,” a divine intervention from which “young Nina never quite recovered.” Such statements, however, overlook the potential influences that Polcyn might have had on Day, the fact that Polcyn was only gradually won over to the vision of the Catholic Worker, and the extent to which Polcyn would become an international force in her own right. In fact, Day spent most of her time in the Polcyn home listening “about the work my father did as a railway switchman.”

During her senior year at Marquette, Polcyn spent less time on campus and more at St. Matthew’s. Polcyn recalls that she talked about the Catholic Worker to her classmates in the evening course at St. Matthews:

> It is the age of the laity, when people are taking personal responsibility. Dorothy always said we didn’t need to ask a priest if we could do something, we just did it. This healthy independence has paved the way for peace, the work with the poor,

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126 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
127 Larson, “One for the Books.”
128 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
labor unions … social conscience.\textsuperscript{130}

As Polecyn’s recollection suggests, Day was carving out a devotional and activist space based on a countercultural understanding of Catholic selfhood and authority. Unlike most priest-run Catholic Action initiatives, Day emphasized personal lay responsibility, the primacy of collective conscience, and the centrality of suffering.\textsuperscript{131}

After graduating from Marquette, Polecyn moved to New York City to volunteer at the Catholic Worker in the Bowery District. The experience was overwhelming to Polecyn’s senses, particularly the “bedbugs, breadlines, dirt, drunks, narcotic addicts, senile old people, and perpetual crises,” Polecyn later recalled.\textsuperscript{132} Polecyn helped Day organize the picketing of the German Consulate and the battleship Bremen. It was during this shared summer of poverty that Polecyn first had doubts about whether she could muster the same amount of “integrity” with the poor that Dorothy had found in the wake of the Great Depression.\textsuperscript{133} As winter approached, Polecyn moved back to Milwaukee to write copy for Gimbel’s Department Store and, finding that task dull, later accepted an appointment as a substitute high school teacher, which paid $5 a day.\textsuperscript{134} But Polecyn felt lonely and the

\textsuperscript{130} “A Month at the Catholic Worker in 1935,” 1980, series W-17, box 2, folder 4, Nina Polecyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
\textsuperscript{132} Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
\textsuperscript{133} “A Month at the Catholic Worker in 1935,” 1980, series W-17, box 2, folder 4, Nina Polecyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
\textsuperscript{134} “A Month at the Catholic Worker in 1935,” 1980, series W-17, box 2, folder 4, Nina Polecyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
thought of Dorothy nagged at her conscience, “making what I was doing seem non-meaningful.”

In October 1937, Polcyn harnessed this anxiety by founding Holy Family, Milwaukee’s first Catholic Worker house of hospitality for the destitute. During its five years of operation, the house fed an average of two hundred men each day, fifty of whom were also given clothing and overnight shelter. In addition to ministering to the poor, in the 1940s this group of Catholic Workers also committed themselves to pacifism, as articulated through Father John Hugo, the Pittsburgh priest who introduced Day to retreats and shared with her a disdain for American bourgeois life. The Milwaukee workers participated in eight-day retreats, focused on silent meditation and reading of the Bible. Polcyn articulated the mutual influence that she, Day, and Fr. Hugo had on each other:

Father Hugo said that as a result of the letters from [our house] in Milwaukee, he began to clarify the peace position in the Catholic Church … Dorothy encouraged everybody to do [the retreat], which was very hard going. She herself was a woman of great dedication to a life of prayer, and I think she had a regimen in her life that was not altogether espoused by everybody.

Amid Polcyn’s unwavering pacifism and rejection of World War II, donations to Holy Family declined precipitously. Without money to buy heating fuel, Polcyn went door-to-

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135 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
136 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
137 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
139 “Holy Family House, Milwaukee, 1937-1942” series W-17, box 2, folder 9, Nina Polcyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
These early collaborations facilitated Polcyn’s immersion into personalist theology and ritual. Over the next forty years, Polcyn and Day continued to collaborate and support one another at critical moments. Polcyn was Day’s lieutenant in 1937, orchestrating local protests against Adolph Hitler and picketing the German Consulate. It was the first of many activist events at which the women stood alongside one another. Even as her own career in the liturgical movement blossomed over the following decade, Polcyn made frequent trips to visit Dorothy in New York. During these shorter stays, her favorite “route” for selling the Catholic Worker newspaper was along New York’s infamous Irish Waterfront. Throughout the 1940s, Polcyn and Day were jailed several times for other protests in New York. In 1955, when Day was arrested along with twenty-nine other pacifists for the first Civil Defense protest, Polcyn immediately paid Day’s bail; in doing so, Polcyn went directly against Bayard Rustin’s opinion that Day and the other protesters should have stayed in jail for a few days as a public display of suffering. The following year, Polcyn went even further: she sat next to Day, arms joined, at the infamous 1956 Civil Defense action in Washington Square Park (the protest that later signaled the pinnacle of Day’s public career). They were both arrested that day.

140 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
142 Riegle, Dorothy, 51.
For the three decades during which Polcyn lived in downtown Chicago, 1943 – 1973, Day was known for staying with Polcyn during her frequent trips to the Windy City. Polcyn and Dorothy were also travelling companions. Among other journeys, Polcyn was Day’s personal travel companion for their well-publicized 1971 peace delegation to the Soviet Union. Their itinerary included meetings with peace activists in Moscow, Leningrad, Warsaw, Hungary, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. In Polcyn’s obituary in the National Catholic Reporter, Robert McClory summarized Polcyn as “Dorothy’s oldest and dearest friend.”

The most divisive conflict in their lifelong friendship came in 1942, when Polcyn informed Day of her decision to shutter Holy Family house. “The telegram Dorothy sent back,” Polcyn said, “showed how hurt she was. She was very wounded and very disappointed.” In her decision to move to Chicago, Polcyn listened to the counsel of another among her confidants, Baroness Catherine de Hueck Doherty, founder of the concomitant Friendship House movement. De Hueck promised Polcyn that Bishop Bernard Sheil would pay her a handsome wage and “convinced” the Bishop to immediately hire Polcyn. When Polcyn arrived at Bishop Bernard Sheil’s office, she “flinched with pleasure as the prelate, loudly thumbing his desk with his episcopal ring, informed her in

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143 Riegle, Dorothy, 204; Herr, “Gentle Firebrand,” Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
145 “Holy Family House, Milwaukee, 1937-1942” series W-17, box 2, folder 9, Nina Polcyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
no uncertain terms that God had work for them to do in Chicago.”

Afterwards, supposedly, “the Baroness [de Hueck] took the two women to their room in the Morrison Hotel… went to the window, stretched out her hands in a prophetic gesture, and proclaimed in her deep-throated Russian voice, “I give you the city of Chicago.”

Sheil hired Polcyn in 1943 to serve as his assistant director of the Catholic Youth Organization. Among other duties, the new job required Polcyn to teach and administer at the brand new “Sheil School.”

Polcyn witnessed firsthand the entirety of the daring, if ultimately failed, vision Bishop Bernard J. Sheil and Catherine de Hueck had for evangelizing the entire city through an adult-education ministry named the Sheil School of Social Studies. One of Bishop Sheil’s many apparatuses of Catholic Action, the school was initially housed within the headquarters of his Catholic Youth Organization in the Chicago “Loop,” at 31 E. Congress Parkway. As an early student later described, the school was a “revolutionary concept in Catholic education.”

Polcyn’s mission was to demonstrate to Chicago’s laboring class the dramatic connections among world history, Roman Catholic theology, and the liturgy of the Eucharist. In plain terms, the school was meant to raise up the minds and souls of Chicago’s workers, inspiring them to recognize their role in the Mystical Body of Christ and fight for higher labor standards.

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147 Larson, “One for the Books.”
149 In addition to Polcyn, some of the other leaders De Hueck claimed as her disciples were Thomas Merton and Bishop Sheil himself.
150 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
151 Although there were some afternoon courses, the Sheil School specialized in evening classes and weekend lectures, capitalizing on its proximity not only to the “L” trains but also to Union
courses, Polcyn taught her own classes, the backbone of which were her popular courses on “General Ethics” and “Catholic Social Doctrine In Action.”

Although she was devoted to the school’s mission and the needs of Chicago workers, Polcyn was more passionate about the learned conversations she had with visiting lecturers and local mainstays, and in 1947 Sheil transferred her to the other physical “arm” of his CYO, St. Benet’s Library.

Sara Benedicta O’Neill’s Vision for St. Benet’s

Historians of religion would benefit from a fuller analysis of St. Benet’s Library and Bookstore, particularly because of the challenges it raises to our extant narratives about preconciliar American Catholicism. But that is beyond my scope here. Rather, this section briefly summarizes the founding of St. Benet’s and its influence on the Chicago lay apostolate prior to Polcyn’s becoming an employee of and, later, the sole proprietor of St. Benet’s Bookstore.

Sarah Benedicta O’Neill (1869 – 1954) was a pioneer in the twin Catholic Action enterprises that we now call the Liturgical Movement and the Catholic Library Movement. O’Neill attributed her lifelong vision for the bookstore to her disappointment in the absence of Catholic resources on the campus of Northwestern University, where from 1881

Station, which was then the busiest travel concourse in the world. Course topics included: “God; Liturgy; Science; Practical Writing; and the Negro in America.”

152 Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”

153 See my in-progress journal article on St. Benet’s, which grew out of my work for this monograph with the scattered collections of Polcyn’s papers within the archives of the University of Notre Dame, the Chicago Historical Society, Loyola University, and Marquette University.
- 1885 she was the only Roman Catholic student in the Liberal Arts curriculum.\textsuperscript{154} During her third year at Northwestern, O’Neill’s father passed away unexpectedly. She immediately sought employment and was hired into the Chicago public school system, where she taught middle and high school for the next 37 years. After a few years of teaching history, O’Neill enrolled in an evening library science course offered downtown by the University of Chicago where she heard a lecture that changed her life forever, an inspiring tale “about how the Benedictines had saved western culture by preserving Christian and pagan learning in the Middle Ages.”\textsuperscript{155} She was so inspired by her imagining of this act of scholar-heroism that, in 1902, O’Neill travelled to the monastery at Monte Cassino, Italy, where she was received as a Benedictine Oblate.\textsuperscript{156} The ancient, subterranean Italian chapel where O’Neill consecrated herself to Benedict was the same pilgrimage site to which Ellen Gates Star (1859 – 1940) – the Chicago social worker, artisan, and \textit{Orate Fratres} contributor – had travelled several times and was also received as an oblate.\textsuperscript{157} Starr and O’Neill were thus two of the first in a long line of men and women in the liturgical movement who chose to devote their apostolic vocations to the third order of St. Benedict, including Maisie Ward, Ade Bethune, Dorothy Day, Nina

\textsuperscript{154} Nina Polcyn, “Open Letter to the Grail,” in \textit{The Grail} XIII no. 5 (May 1950), CPOL UNDA. In spite of this hindsight, it took some forty years for O’Neill to start to realize her dream of a Catholic bookstore. Little is known about O’Neill’s life during the period from 1889 - 1931.\textsuperscript{155} Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop”\textsuperscript{156} Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Orate Fratres} was the benchmark journal of the liturgical movement, edited by prominent reformer Virgil Michel, and published by his institution, St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota.
Polcyn, Mary Perkins, John Ryan, Patrick Crowley, and Patty Crowley. In addition to the Orders’ famed libraries, O’Neill said that she was drawn to the vocation by St. Benedict’s “emphasis on the family as the basic unit of society.”

When O’Neill returned from Italy, she joined the Chicago Calvert Club, a prominent Catholic intellectual group known within the city, somewhat derogatorily, as “the Commonweal Catholics.” O’Neill began to build contacts in the Catholic publishing industry, forging relationships with The Queen’s Work, Publisher’s Weekly, and Catholic New World (the Chicago archdiocesan magazine). One Tuesday, O’Neill placed a homemade sign in the window of her sister’s parlor, announcing that she would be selling Catholic books and serving tea. One year later, in 1925, O’Neill came into an inheritance from the passing of her sister, Mrs. John Cudahy, with whom O’Neill had been living for the past decade, and who had created an annuity to take care of O’Neill in the event of her death. Mrs. Cudahy’s wealth had come, in turn, from the success of her late husband, who was one of the five entrepreneurial Cudahy brothers in Chicago’s meat-packing district.

With this financial security, O’Neill kept her tea-library afloat for the next seven years, and the story of her dream spread throughout the Archdiocese. In 1931, Fr. Rowan, then head of the Archdiocesan Council of Catholic Women, offered to relocate the library into a

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158 The trend of consecrating oneself to the oblature remains strong to this day within the Catholic Worker, particularly among Workers who are most committed to Day’s pacifist, anti-nuclear vision, such as Brian Terrell and Betsey Keenan of Peace House in Malloy, Iowa.
160 Senser, “Library in the Marketplace.” The Cudahy’s had built a meatpacking empire, first in Milwaukee and then in Chicago. Around the time of O’Neill’s inheritance, Cudahy Meatpacking was the largest meat producer in the world, and one of the most valuable commodity-based corporations in the United States.
vacant office space downtown. The location was the new Catholic Youth Organization headquarters in the McCormick Building, at the intersection of Michigan and Van Buren Avenues. It was an enormous improvement over O’Neill’s parlor, even if the fourteenth floor was less accessible than she would have liked.161

On October 31, 1931, O’Neill led five other women in consecrating the space; they knelt, recited the Angelus devotional, and declared the new “St. Benet’s Library and Bookshop” officially opened.162 O’Nei chose Benet, an Anglicized form of Benedict, in recognition of her oblature to the Benedictine abbey at Monte Casino. After the move, each month produced new record sales figures. Although O’Neill credited St. Benedict, this success also coincided with a national surge of interest in Catholic intellectual life.163 By the late 1930s, St. Benet’s had six other paid employees, and the “regular” patrons included many leading figures of Chicago’s lay apostolate, as well as the booming Catholic Action priest corps inspired into the movement by Sheil and Reynold Hillenbrand. The fame and freedom allowed O’Neill to travel more frequently to Europe, where she spent most of her time visiting monasteries and meeting with liturgical innovators. O’Neil forged lasting friendships in particular with the Abbot of Bruges and Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward, the proprietors of the world’s first lay Catholic publishing

161 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop”.
163 As a measure of this newfound success, O’Neill proudly stocked bottles of the aperitif Benedictine behind the counter, which she would offer in “thimble-sized” glasses to European prelates and other distinguished guests in addition to the usual tea. See Herr, “The Gentle Firebrand.”
house, who in turn publicized St. Benet’s as the Midwestern center for “a new Catholic voice.”

The “voice” O’Neill injected into American Catholic life was decidedly gendered. Here was a woman who had, at age 55 in her sister’s parlor, founded what would soon be the largest Catholic bookstore in the country. By 1939, St. Benet’s offered some six thousand volumes for sale, as well as forty periodicals. The availability of multiple copies of Ward’s twenty-two volume English translation of the *Summa Theologica* was emblematic of the fact that St. Benet’s Philosophy section rivaled the offerings at Chicago’s finest university bookstores. Professors from other disciplines likewise frequented St. Benet’s, including University of Chicago political scientist Jerome G. Kerwin. The bookstore was, moreover, the only location in greater Chicago where many Catholic periodicals could be procured, most notably *Commonweal*. O’Neill and her “shop girls” took pride in calling themselves “Commonweal Catholics,” and they took pleasure in the controversies that label entailed, such as when an older bishop purportedly scolded Polcyn by declaring that St. Benet’s should only be allowed to sell *Commonweal* “to members of the Altar and Rosary societies.” Although these stories and statistics speak to the new location’s success, they do not explain the place’s sacred allure. To think of St. Benet’s solely as a library or bookstore is to miss the point. To understand that sacrality, that attraction, the *ritual* that was St. Benet’s, we need to look at what these women *did*

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164 Schalk, “20th Century Marketplace.” When Sheed and Ward opened their New York branch in 1937, it was with O’Neill’s financial help and guidance.
165 Senser, “Library in the Marketplace.”
166 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
there on a daily basis, the ways they interacted with customers, and the liturgical novelties they sold.

St. Benet’s offered an unprecedented variety of Catholic literature, but what brought customer’s into the store were Polcyn and O’Neil’s liturgical visions. From their travels to European monasteries, the women imported to Chicago devotional practices foreign to the city’s Irish elite, particularly prayers normally reserved for monastic life. The central community ritual at St. Benet’s was Saturday Compline. The Compline, attributed to St. Benedict, is the final office within the Liturgy of Hours (the set of canonical readings and songs that structure the daily life of communal prayer at many monastic communities). Sometimes known simply as evening prayers, or vespers, Compline is sung communally. O’Neill and Polcyn began every workday by attending Mass together at Holy Name Cathedral and ended each day by singing Compline in the stockroom of St. Benet’s. In addition to these personal devotions, Polcyn and O’Neil insisted that the entire community at St. Benet’s participate in their Saturday evening service. “Most of the customers,” Polcyn later reflected, “must have thought they had entered something crazy.” Fr. Hans A. Reinhold, a daily patron to St. Benet’s and himself an internationally renowned liturgical leader, “thought it was utterly inappropriate” to chant the sacred songs during bookstore hours. And yet through this ritual, participants at St. Benet’s became very close to one another. Polcyn later spoke of them as her “family,” describing how they would “gather together to nourish our bodies and souls

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168 Pecklers, Unread Vision, 204.
169 Pecklers, Unread Vision, 204.
with bread and wine” (which they shared in place of the weekday “menu” of tea and cookies). Polcyn and O’Neill’s gravitas within the liturgical movement was so great that several upstart lay organizations began to hold their monthly meetings at St. Benet’s, including the League of the Divine Office, the Vernacular Society, and Young Christian Workers.170

St. Benet’s Under Polcyn’s Leadership

O’Neil had made St. Benet’s the switchboard for Catholic Action groups in Chicago. From 1943 – 1973, under Polcyn’s watch, the bookstore grew into something even more influential: an influential center for theological debate, a museum quality collection of liturgical art, and a welcoming, familiar coffee-shop-like space where Chicago’s most prominent apostles mingled with Protestant “regulars” like Paul Tillich and Martin Marty. In a sentence, Polcyn transformed St. Benet’s into the modern Catholic salon of the Midwest.

Bishop Sheil enticed O’Neill to let the CYO takeover St. Benet’s operating costs in February 1943, just one month Polcyn had begun as his assistant. She was immediately captivated by the bookstore next door. “I was vastly more interested in the St. Benet operation than in the Sheil School,” Polcyn explained. Her enthusiasm stemmed from the unrealized potential of St. Benet’s, “the tremendous possibilities, the germ, the gem of an idea that could blossom out into a cultural oasis, something that could vivify what was

happening in the Church.” In 1947, when O’Neill’s age forced her to ask for help with the bookstore’s day-to-day operations, Sheil reassigned Polcyn to officially serve as St. Benet’s manager. As Polcyn took over, she made changes that conflicted with her dying mentor’s legacy. The main point of tension between them was liturgical arts. O’Neill and many in her cohort of early reformers adored singing in Latin, whereas Polcyn fought vigorously to promote the vernacular. This battle over music was paralleled by similar generational disputes over the visual liturgical arts: painting, sculpture, clothing, and architecture. These disagreements came to a head when Polcyn started to sell liturgical artwork at the bookstore. O’Neill warned, “There’ll be too much kitsch, and you’ll burn in hell with Benzinger.” So Polcyn made small changes, at first only bringing in modern paintings to dress up the store’s walls.

O’Neill died on January 11, 1954. Later that year, Sheil left the bookstore as well, under intense pressure to resign his leadership of the Catholic Youth Organization and the other Catholic Action enterprises he had overseen, which all suffered a precipitous decline in financial support following Sheil’s outspoken criticism of the Republican Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy. The Catholic Youth Organization was dismantled, with the CYO given over to the leadership of Msgr. Daniel Cantwell. Amidst the chaotic

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171 Oral history interview with Rosalie Riegle. Riegle 129.
172 During Polcyn’s first year in Chicago, Sheil had reassigned the roommate with whom Polcyn had moved, Margaret Blaser, to work on the staff of St. Benet’s.
173 In highlighting these generational trends, I do not mean to suggest that every liturgical reformer followed the broader impulse of their respective generation. Polcyn’s tastes within the visual arts were, in fact, virtually identical to those of Ellen Gates Starr (1859 – 1940), who was ten years O’Neill’s senior. Some of the most celebrated reformers, moreover, came to champion both sides of such debates over the long tenure of their careers within the liturgical movement, including Msgr. Hillenbrand and the “father” of American movement, Virgil Michel himself.
174 Nina Polcyn Moore, interview with Keith Pecklers, 205.
reorganization, Msgr. Jack Egan convinced Cardinal Stritch to grant ownership of the bookstore entirely to Polcyn, free of charge. Overnight, Polcyn became sole proprietor of St. Benet’s, effectively inheriting all of its revenues, inventory, and $45,000 in its bank account. Egan later told his biographer that he thought of St. Benet’s as “a jewelry box” for Polcyn. Polcyn summarized her relationship with Egan as “the fire that called me to change the world.”

Polcyn relocated the store to a retail space adjacent to DePaul University, where it would remain for the next twenty-two years. When Polcyn opened the “new” St. Benet’s in 1958, she and Egan received congratulatory telegrams from many distinguished patrons, including Jacques Maritain and Mayor Richard J. Daley. For everyday visitors, the new location, on the ground level of 300 S. Wabash, made dropping by the store a more casual affair. According to a patron-journalist, “People now feel at home in St. Benet’s. Frequently, they will call or stop just to chat. Couples use the shop as a meeting place before a date.” The conversations at St. Benet’s varied from heated philosophical exchanges to mundane concerns. Students from the University of Chicago, DePaul, Loyola, Rosary College, Northwestern, and Notre Dame gathered at St. Benet’s to debate existentialism. Many of those same students likewise used the space to organize protests against rising Chicago Transportation Authority rates. It was, simply, the space of the Chicago lay apostolate, a “place where, if you hang around long enough… sooner or later

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175 Frisbie, An Alley in Chicago, 131-2.
176 Jacques Maritain to John Egan and Nina Polcyn, telegram, 20 Mar 1958, Western Union, CPOL UNDA; Richard J. Daley to Nina Polcyn, telegram, 21 Mar 1958, Western Union, CPOL UNDA.
178 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
the person you want to see will show up.” ¹⁷⁹ Polcyn’s model of a Catholic bookstore qua center of social activism was so successful that it caught on across the country. There were three other particularly noteworthy similar endeavors during this period: The Junipero Sera Bookshop in San Francisco, California; the Paraclete Bookstore in Brooklyn, New York; and the Thomas More Bookshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Polcyn decorated the new St. Benet’s with wall-to-wall artwork. Explaining the new look to customers, she proudly proclaimed, “The times have changed. Chicago has changed. The Church has changed. And so must this store.” ¹⁸⁰ In Polcyn’s estimation, the vocation of O’Neill’s generation had been to increase Catholic literacy with theological and liturgical texts. Deeming that mission successfully completed, Polcyn saw her own generation as needing to show everyday laypersons how the Spirit felt; how the Passion could feel; how the liturgy could feel. Although the shelves overflowed with books, she also began selling more and more liturgical sculpture, until she became – in her own words, a “merchant princess trafficker in crucifixes.” ¹⁸¹

Polcyn had little patience for customers who were pained by the changes. One former regular became so upset that she screamed at Polcyn, “You are a handmaid of the devil!” The woman must have been too hurt to hold it in, and this accusation, along with tears, poured out when she came to the store to peruse her favorite authors and instead was confronted by a new statue of the Madonna that lacked all facial features, a Madonna even more extreme than the modern tile mural which Polcyn had commissioned for the store’s

¹⁷⁹ Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop,” 2.
¹⁸⁰ Herr, “Gentle Firebrand.”
¹⁸¹ Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
new entrance. Polcyn responded, “You know, no one really knew exactly what Our Lady looked like.” But Polcyn’s words only further inflamed the customer, who exploded, “I know what Our Lady looks like.”

Although Polcyn was moved by this particular encounter, this was precisely the kind of embodied horror felt by some Catholics that she was intent on confronting. “Catholicism is not a religion of the past,” Polcyn explained, “nor should its art be.”

In part because of Polcyn’s bold, outspoken opinions on liturgical art, St. Benet’s achieved world-class fame. It even gained a sense of exclusivity. Some Chicago laypersons imagined their beloved bookshop as “the Catholic counterpart to Ciro’s or the Stork Club.” Indeed, the Second Vatican Council seemed to confirm, for Polcyn, that her lifelong efforts to modernize the liturgy and its artwork were coming into full fruition. Clients raved about Polcyn’s “oasis in the Loop, for Catholics united by a common hunger and thirst for fresh bread and… drunk on the new wine of Vatican II.” The store was “the intellectual powerhouse” of the city’s Catholics, “particularly for Catholic movements.” At the 25th Anniversary gala, Egan summarized it as “the meeting place and a unifying force for apostolic groups in the Chicago area.” Yet another observer likened it to “a sort of clearinghouse for visiting abbots, priests, authors, and converts, most of whom were indebted to Polcyn for inspiring them to see their faith through

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184 Schalk, 20th Century Bookshop,” 2.
185 Larson, “One for the Books.”
186 Senser, “Library in the Marketplace.”
different eyes.”188 Famous European authors, when they were in town, would do more than just peruse the bookstore. For example, Dom Mauro Inguanex, former librarian at Monte Casino and the most famous paleographer of his generation, stayed for with Polcyn for two weeks and insisted on “doing the dishes” each day in the library kitchen.189 Such gestures could carry powerful resonance within the liturgical movement. Polcyn’s close friend, Adé Bethune, argued that mundane tasks like washing dishes or sweeping the floor were actually everyday forms of religious art, wherein all believers labored in tandem, sharing humbly in the Mystical Body of Christ.190

Given that their romance blossomed in the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, it is possible that Polcyn and Egan had anticipated that priests would soon be allowed to marry. Indeed, their relationship changed markedly as the Catholic 60s subsided, with Egan becoming so patriarchal that Polcyn felt said “he held a stiletto to my spine.”191 Egan began to act like a leader who merely dropped breadcrumbs for Polcyn to follow, and she said he made her feel like, “you better pick them up, darling, because otherwise you’re going to be dead.”192 By 1973, Polcyn was conflicted as to whether she could accept the proposal of another suitor, Thomas Eugene “Gene” Moore (1913 – 1996), a prosperous banker and recent widower. Polcyn and Moore had fond memories of their time together as undergraduates at Marquette. According to Egan’s recollection, he counseled Polcyn to accept Moore’s marriage proposal.

188 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop.”
189 Schalk, “20th Century Bookshop,” 2.
190 Adé Bethune, “This Here Life,” The Christian Social Art Quarterly 3 (1940).
191 Frisbie, An Alley in Chicago, 132.
192 Frisbie An Alley in Chicago, 132.
St. Benet’s closed in 1973, when Polcyn closed the store to move with Gene Moore to Sauk, Wisconsin. Polcyn and Moore’s wedding ceremony was at Northwestern’s Sheil Center. Dorothy Day was in attendance, and Polcyn hired a New York catering company to serve “a meat feast” to all the residents at the Bowery CW House, so that poor would share in her good fortune.193

II. Patricia Caron Crowley and the Mystical Body of Christ

Although Polcyn and Crowley eventually became close friends, the two women had grown up “a world” apart. Whereas Polcyn had been a working-class, first-generation immigrant born into the “Catholic ghetto” of a Milwaukee Polonia, Patty was raised in a beachfront mansion along the idyllic coast of suburban Lake Michigan, in the affluent north shore Chicago suburb of Wilmette. And whereas Nina created a local lay movement around artwork and books, Patty and her husband forged a national network of Catholic Action cells that revolved around the norms of motherhood and raising children. Indeed, the Christian Family Movement resituated the Mystical Body of Christ in the household relationships between husband and wife, father and daughter, mother and son. At the height of their ministry, Pat (1911 – 1974) and Patty (1913 – 2001) had captivated a membership of more than 150,000 couples with their vision of nuclear families as the building block for the Mystical Body of Christ.

193 St. Benet Shop 1943-1973, 1979, series W-17, box 2, folder 10, Nina Polcyn Moore Papers, Dorothy Day-Catholic Worker Collection Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI.
Patty’s father, Olividas Joseph Caron, was a Canadian-born Irish Catholic and self-made entrepreneur. Her mother, Marietta Higman, was born into a Baptist family that lived on a 250-acre estate on the beach side of Lake Shore Drive. After having three children, Marietta was diagnosed with “a nervous breakdown” and, soon thereafter, converted to Roman Catholicism, embracing O.J.’s “strict Jansenism.” Patty attended the Sacred Heart Convent in Lake Forest, an enclave where the city’s most prominent Irish lawyers and politicians sent their daughters to isolate them from the realities of urban Chicago. Patty disliked the school’s exclusivity, and she insisted that her parents enroll her at a “normal parochial school,” so they sent her to Immaculata High School in the city’s Gold Coast. When Patty finished high school in 1932, she travelled to Ireland to attend the 1932 Eucharistic Congress, and then began her studies at Trinity Women’s College in Washington, D.C.

Pat’s paternal grandfather, Jeremiah, had emigrated to Boston during the Great Famine and been a member of the Fenian Brotherhood before becoming a Federal Treasury Agent of minor fame (Jeremiah’s exploits as a crusader against drug-smuggling

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194 O.J. Caron had grown up as a peasant in the farmlands of Saint Adrian’s of Ireland, a small town in Quebec that his family had settled in the 1840s during the Great Famine. When the family moved to Woonsocket, Rhode Island, O.J. dropped out of high school to clean the latrines at Lafayette Worsted, a large textile mill. But with an “insatiable” appetite for success, O.J. eventually became the sole selling agent for a conglomerate of East Coast textile mills. See John N. Kotre, *Simple Gifts: The Lives of Pat and Patty Crowley* (Kansas City, Kan.: Andrews and McMeel, 1979), 9.

195 Marietta’s childhood home was a gleaming white mansion, on a bluff overlooking the lake. It was one of the first structures on the North Shore constructed with internal and external electrical lighting, full plumbing amenities on all four floors, and other luxuries, such as a five-acre vineyard. See Kotre 10 – 11.

gangsters were syndicated in national newspapers). Jeremiah married into the Sullivan family, and their eldest son, Jerome (Pat’s father), matriculated at the University of Notre Dame and finished his law degree at the University of Michigan.\textsuperscript{197} His popularity led him to run for several political offices, but he was no match for Anton Cermak in the Chicago mayoral race. Pat’s mother, Henrietta O’Brien, was also the daughter of Irish immigrants, and her family owned the O’Brien Varnish Company of South Bend, Indiana. Married in 1908, the couple had two sons, Jerry in 1909 and Patrick in 1911. Both boys attended grammar school and then Loyola Academy, a popular Jesuit school along the lakefront (not far from Caron’s Sacred Heart), and Pat went on to study law at the University of Notre Dame.\textsuperscript{198} The ensuing depression meant little business for the family law firm, but income from the O’Brien Paint and Varnish factories blunted the difference.\textsuperscript{199}

Pat and Patty met at the Tre Ore at Holy Family Cathedral on Good Friday, 1934. Following a summer of courtship, they promised themselves to each other, and Pat completed his graduate work at Loyola University while waiting for Patty to finish a year abroad in Paris.\textsuperscript{200} The couple stayed in touch by writing letters. Among the other topics they discussed, Patty was intrigued by her contact in Paris with the \textit{Jeunesse Ouvrière}.

\textsuperscript{197} Kotre, \textit{Simple Gifts}, 20. Although Jerome’s law practice, Barry and Crowley, specialized in corporate law, he also infamously represented “Shoeless Joe Jackson,” the most heartbreaking hero of the 1919 Chicago “Black” Sox.

\textsuperscript{198} Kotre, \textit{Simple Gifts}, 22.

\textsuperscript{199} Kotre, \textit{Simple Gifts}, 23. During the Great Depression, both the Caron and the Crowley families had sufficient wealth to maintain not only their formidable North Shore estates, but also the amenities and full house staffs that went with them.

\textsuperscript{200} The social successes of their respective families may have made their choices seem infinite, yet one cannot help but notice the boundaries of their courtship and the privileged contexts in which they met. Likewise, Pat’s brother, Jerry, married Patty’s Parisian roommate, Puddy Giblin, after meeting her at this 1937 wedding. Kotre, \textit{Simple Gifts}, 33
Chrétienne (Young Christian Workers). They married five months after Patty returned, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church, the mother congregation for English-speaking parishes in the archdiocese. The ensuing wedding reception, although “scaled back” to reflect the hard times, was nevertheless so luxurious that it garnered much talk of the town.

Pat and Patty had five children. After giving birth to Patricia Ann (1939), Patty was due again in 1940 but suffered a miscarriage, and in 1942 she gave birth to a son who died just two days later. In 1943, Mary Ann was born, followed by a son, Patrick, in 1944. These dependents shielded Pat from the draft when World War II came. Instead, the war brought Pat more wealth; he was hired to head the estate division of the Alien Property Custodian Agency, a government entity that seized Japanese and German businesses and homes. 201

The Christian Family Movement

During the 1940s, the Crowley’s became involved with Catholic Action. Due in part to the soaring popularity of St. Benet’s, the grassroots idea of forming alternative Catholic Action cells spread out into the suburbs. When Patrick Crowley heard about Bishop Sheil’s urban cells, he became intrigued by the idea and decided to start a Catholic Action cell for young white-collar businessmen. Under the direct supervision of Hillenbrand, Crowley’s group of six married businessmen (four lawyers and two commodity traders) began meeting in Crowley’s downtown office building each Monday

201 Kotre, Simple Gifts, 35. In fact, of all their cousins and siblings, Pat and Patty only had one relative who serves in the war, and he returned home without a scratch.
night. Lacking a more compelling aspect of social conflict in their privileged lives, “decided that we’d straighten out marriage and then move onto something more serious.”202

The wives of these six men found the situation insulting. “Absolutely ridiculous,” Patty Crowley told her biographer, “the men were never home and they were out talking about marriage. We would go to a party, and Pat would have a few martinis and he’d talk about this Mystical Body and it was always so funny. But I didn’t like it because I wasn’t part of it.”203 Patty invited the other wives to start their own home prayer and poker group, to which the men were not invited. According to Patty, the husbands became nervous about what the women might say to each other without them in the room, so the men and women mutually agreed to combine the two groups.204 To their husbands’ astonishment, the wives were more prepared in their theological and social studies prior to each week’s meeting, such that during the joint meetings “the women did all of the talking.”205 Thus the first set of Catholic Action cells comprised of couples (and articulating the family as the basic Jocist unit) was born out of intra-marital competition and gendered jealousy, rather than – as is often supposed in romanticized summaries of the Christian Family Movement – out of theological principle for the divine equality of genders.206

202 Pat Crowley, quoted in Kotre, Simple Gifts, 43.
203 Patricia Crowley, quoted in Kotre, Simple Gifts, 43.
204 Kotre, Simple Gifts, 42.
205 Kotre, Simple Gifts, 46.
206 During the same year, a separate couples-based CA cell began holding very similar meetings in South Bend, Indiana. The causal relationship between the Chicago and South Bend cells remains murky, with Fr. Putz as the only personal connection between the two new communities. Burnie Bauer had been one of the first acolytes in Putz’s student movement at Notre Dame, and in 1942 he and his wife Helene began a couples’ cell in South Bend. But the war proved much more disruptive
In 1945, Pat and Patty’s original cell of six couples planned a weekend retreat at St. Johns Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, to be received as oblates of St. Benedict. The Crowley’s were drawn, they explained, to the Benedictine norms of communal decision-making and of respect for the dignity of each individual member, both of which are patterned in the Rule of St. Benedict around the model of the family. The Crowleys thus followed Sara Benedicta O’Neil in citing “the family model” as the center of their Benedictine devotionalism. St. John’s Abbey was, moreover, the monastery from which Michel Virgil had launched *Orate Fratres*, and its campus the same site O’Neill had chosen to host the annual retreat for her Liturgical Week conferences every year from 1935 – 1943. For their regular conferences and meetings, the couples met at St. Procopius, in Lisle, IL, which was the same abbey at which Dorothy Day, Nina Polcyn, and many other Catholic Workers had become oblates. Patty continued to choose it as the site for the annual CFM conferences until the retreat outgrew the space in the 1960s, at which point it was moved to the University of Notre Dame. This strong connection between Chicago Catholic Action and the Benedictine order continued through the 1990s. In particular, note two of the most striking survivor connections: Marilyn Steffel organized the 1993 and 1994 LINKUP annual conferences at St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville (discussed in Chapter 3). Likewise, Richard Sipe, one of the two most venerated “survivor saints” to the less-affluent couples in the Indiana movement, with most of their husbands conscripted or drafted into the U.S. armed forces. In spite of its subsequent merger with Pat and Patty’s group, the South Bend cell is important because it demonstrates that the Crowley’s vision of family cells was part of a much broader impetus, albeit of imprecise origins, within the international Catholic Action movement. Indeed, by 1948 there were family CA cells across Europe, such as the *Mouvement Populaire de Famille* in Paris, which shared no direct lineage to the Crowley’s movement.
(analyzed in Chapter 6), became an expert on priestly child sexual abuse through his duties as a Benedictine monk.

In 1946, Patty launched the group’s newsletter, ACT, “a Quarterly of Adult Catholic Action,” and the Chicago movement rapidly blossomed into four additional cells of six couples each. (The journal’s name reflected the third and most popular aspect of the Cardijn’s three step “Jocist” method of social inquiry: Observe, Judge, Act). As they grew, the couples’ cells met and prayed separately, but they frequently collaborated on their direct actions. Such actions included gathering the donations and then shipping approximately 100 large supply crates to European refugee families; raising money for Nina and de Hueck’s Chicago Friendship House; and promoting visiting lectureships at St. Benet’s bookstore.\(^{207}\)

Patty and some of the other women in her cell also began working with Nina Polcyn and Jack Egan on more sustained action, an annual pre-marriage retreat run by laypersons. They called the retreat “Pre-Cana,” and coordinated with the Cana Conference (which Egan led and Polcyn administered). The relationship between Cana and Pre-Cana was mostly smooth for the first few years of this collaboration, but when the Christian Family Movement was formed – ostensibly as the logical, lifetime follow-up to pre-Cana and Cana – Egan grew frustrated with the Crowley’s programs, which appeared to many to be consuming his Cana both in popularity and in practice. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there would be constant tension and occasional outbursts of conflict between the

two groups. Pat and Patty formally incorporated their organization in 1947; they called it the Catholic Action Federation. At Patty’s request, Cardinal Stritch appointed Egan as the official chaplain to both of the Crowley’s lay ministries (Pre-Cana and CA).

A few months later, their fifth child was born, and Pat told friends that they named her Catherine Ann because they wanted to commemorate the new federation. After life-threatening complications in that pregnancy, she later told her first biographer that the experience was “the turning point” of her life – the moment that cemented her marriage and inspired her to commit the rest of her life to the mission of the lay apostolate. By 1948, the Catholic Action Federation had grown steadily to more than 1,000 members (approximately 40 couples’ cells). Through Jack Egan, the Crowleys met Burnie and Helene Bauer. Recognizing the synergy between their twin efforts, the Crowleys and Bauers decided to explore the possibility of starting a national network. Over the following twelve months, Polcyn, Egan, and the Crowleys reached out across the country in search of similar groups of family Catholic Action cells. They found that smaller movements had already begun in at least eleven U.S. cities, including Milwaukee, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and New York.

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209 Kotre, Simple Gifts, 55. (“Turning Point” is a chapter title in Kotre. Turning Point was also the title of McClory’s biography, twenty years later, of Crowley’s frustration with the Papal Commission on Birth Control.) After the trauma of this fifth delivery, Patty did not give birth again, but in addition to raising their four surviving children, she and Pat fostered 14 kids over the following two decades, all through the Chicago Catholic Charities program, and adopted one of the children, Theresa Christine. Ever the model of Benedictine hospitality, Patty also welcomed as family 50-some foreign middle school, high school, and college exchange students from Europe, Africa, and Asia, most of whom lived as a Crowley for a full semester.
The federation focused on the spiritual formation of married couples. Patty invited the leading couples from these other groups to a retreat that she billed as the first annual meeting of American Catholic Action.\textsuperscript{211} The national “delegate” couples had varying interests and, in turn, competing visions of what the fledgling movement should focus on. Some delegates attempted to push the group towards addressing broader social issues rather than just focusing on family life. However, the majority of the couples at the meeting had little interest in such hands-on work. Delegates also disagreed over membership criteria. Pat and Patty felt strongly that the movement should only include married couples; a minority of the national delegates advocated a more inclusive understanding of the family. From 1949 onward, the married-only restriction was strictly enforced. The new model excluded, among many others, Nina Polcyn from further involvement in the Crowley’s organization. The following year, Patty hosted a much larger retreat, for couples and priests only, at St. Procopius College in Lisle, Illinois. There, Pat and Patty relented to the proposed name change of “Christian Family Movement,” which, other delegates successfully persuaded the voting majority, would be more welcoming to non-Catholic families.

From 1950 to 1974, the Christian Family Movement was the world’s largest community of specialized Catholic Action cells.\textsuperscript{212} The movement articulated its mission as fostering social justice and the Mystical Body of Christ by ensuring the health of the

\textsuperscript{211} Kotre, Simple Gifts, 62. In addition to Egan, Sheil, Hillenbrand, and Putz, Patty and Polcyn invited several other distinguished chaplains, including Fr. Theodore Hesburgh.

\textsuperscript{212} For more information on the movement’s internal history from 1950 - 1974, see Burns, Disturbing the Peace, and Kotre, Simple Gifts. The subsequent national and international expansion of the Christian Family Movement is beyond the scope of this local case study.
family, which Pat and Patty viewed as the most basic unit of both society and church. For their work in forging this enormous lay apostolate, Patty received much praise from the hierarchy. In 1957, the Holy See awarded her and Pat *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* Medals (unofficially known as the Gold Cross of Honor), the highest distinction that a layperson can receive from the Pope. At the height of its cultural and religious influence, in 1964, the CFM included more than 50,000 official dues-paying member couples. But the following year, the organization was torn apart by the precipitous attrition of white couples who did not share Pat and Patty’s vision of racial justice. In 1967, CFM was down to 32,000 members; by 1968, only 16,600 members. Pat and Patty served as the president couple from 1950 – 1968, after which they focused increasingly on the international chapters of CFM that had, by that time, established footholds in seventy-one countries. The movement’s internationalization rejuvenated its rosters to the summit, in the late 1970s, of approximately 150,000 member couples worldwide.

**Humanae Vitae**

*Humanae Vitae* represented the height of the Crowleys’ religious capital, but it also marked a profound shift in the locus of the couple’s, especially Patty’s, future activist agenda. In 1966, Pope Paul VI invited the couple to participate in the conclusion of the four-year Pontifical Commission for the Study of Population, Family, and Births (known colloquially as the Papal Birth Control Commission), which had been initiated by his

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213 Burns, *Disturbing the Peace*, 220.
predecessor, Pope John XXIII, in late 1962, after it became clear that issues of sexuality (including birth control and mandatory celibacy) were not to be taken up by the Second Vatican Council. As members of the commission, Pat and Patty officially represented the view of U.S. families, focusing less on their personal experience than on the data they had collected over the previous two years in a CFM survey that the Vatican had authorized. At the conclusion of this fifth session, held at the Spanish College in Rome, Pat and Patty helped draft the majority report of the commission, which recommended to Paul VI, in no uncertain terms, that the use of contraceptives within marriage is not intrinsically immoral; that contraceptives were a means to ensure greater human dignity; that contraceptives could foster stronger families; and that the details of when such contraceptives are used ought be left to the “conscience” of “the couples themselves.”

The Vatican never publicized the commission’s report, and in July 1968 Paul VI issued the encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*. The Crowleys were, alongside Charles Curran and other prominent theologians, among the loudest American critics of the encyclical. Patty drew harsh criticism from certain Catholics for laying bare the findings of the commission and so openly attempting to undermine the encyclical’s authority. In addition to precipitating the domestic decline of the CFM, the couple’s unapologetic anger cost them many clerical friends, including Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand.

In light of her disillusionment with *Humanae Vitae* and following Pat’s death in November 1974, Patty stepped back from the daily operations of the Christian Family

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Movement. Gradually, she turned her attention to the younger generation of Catholic activists working on gender-centered reform, sponsoring the Women’s Ordination Conference, funding the National Assembly of Religious Women, hosting Chicago Catholic Women’s weekly meetings, creating a women’s Intentional Eucharistic Community, and funding Call to Action. Alongside these activities, Patty shifted more of her resources to issues of poverty and race. In addition to continuing to vigorously fund Chicago Friendship House, Patty founded her own shelter for homeless women, Deborah’s Place, which became the largest non-governmental homeless shelter in the state. In addition to briefly serving as president and chairwoman of the board of Caron International (the company her grandfather had founded), Patty volunteered as an executive board member for a number of non-Catholic nonprofits, including Little Brothers of the Poor, the Foundation for International Cooperation, the International Visitors Center, Friends of Chicago Public Library, the Family Institute of Chicago, the United Nations Association of Chicago, the American Indian Center of Chicago, and the Latino Institute.²¹⁶

**Call to Action**

After Pat’s death, Patty turned all of her energy into empowering a new generation of Chicago activists to take up what she perceived as the unfinished business of Vatican II. In 1976, Crowley spurred a prominent Chicago CFM couple, Sheila and Dan Daley, to challenge Cardinal Cody’s intransigent refusal to sponsor diocesan delegates to participate in the 1976 NCCB “Call to Action” conference in Detroit, the keystone event of the

²¹⁶ Patricia Caron Crowley Papers, 1913 – 2005, Series 3, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University of Chicago.
NCCB’s bicentennial celebration of the American Catholic Church, which was in turn called “Liberty and Justice for All”. “Call to Action” was the culmination of a two-year NCCB process of lay-religious consultation that was billed as the most important event in the history of the U.S. Catholic Church. Echoing Paul VI’s enthusiasm for lay social justice organizations to play a bigger role in addressing issues of inequality, the NCCB convened the “Call to Action” conference in Detroit from October 20 – 23, 1976.

The broad agenda for the Detroit Conference was set nearly two years before, in John Cardinal Dearden’s inauguration of the NCCB’s call for the bicentennial lay consultation process. In February 1975, Dearden explained the NCCB’s intent:

217 The NCCB had selected the name “Call to Action” in 1972, during its planning process to commemorate the upcoming U.S. bicentennial. The bishops’ goal was to demonstrate the culmination of two hundred years of dialogue between the nation’s largest religious population and its fiercely democratic identity. The phrase “call to action” came directly from Pope Paul VI’s language in his May 14, 1971 encyclical *Octogesimo Adveniens*, which was an early indicator of the Vatican’s shift towards the Thomistic personalism that would come to define Catholic liberation theologies and the corresponding institutional reappraisal of global social justice. Paul VI authored the letter in explicit commemoration of the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. Paul’s papal letter culminated in the final section titled “Call to Action”: In the social sphere, the Church has always wished to… take part in action and to spread, with a real care for service and effectiveness, the energies of the gospel… It is to all Christians that we address this fresh and insistent call to action. In my encyclical on the Development of Peoples [*Populorum Progressio* 26 March 1967], I urged: “Laymen should take up as their own proper task the renewal of the temporal order. If the role of the hierarchy is to teach and to interpret authentically the norms of morality to be followed in this matter, it belongs to the laity, without waiting passively for orders and directives, to take the initiatives freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws, and structures of the community in which they live… it is in this regard that Christian organizations, under their different forms, have a responsibility for collective actions… for the pursuit of their task of ‘awakening the People of God to a full understanding of its role at the present time’ and of ‘promoting the lay apostolate.’” *Octogesima Adviens*, pages 48 – 51. (The embedded quotations in the final sentence come from *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*, AAS 59 (1967), Pp.27 and 26).
In the bicentennial effort which we are beginning today, the bishops of the United States invite others to join in the widest possible sharing of assessments of how the American Catholic community can contribute to the quest of all people for liberty and justice. Today, as citizens of a democratic society and members of an interdependent human community, we must assume our full share of responsibility for the economic, political, and cultural betterment of all persons.218

The regional and diocesan consultations held over the following eighteen months involved more than 800,000 laypersons. The 1976 “Call to Action” conference in Detroit was meant to be the singular space where laypersons and bishops would come together to interpret the enormous amount of data those national consultations had produced and distill from them a concrete agenda for translating the vision of Vatican II into direct actions within the United States. The NCCB rented the city’s famed convention center, Cobo Hall, to host the 2500-some attendees, which – in addition to more than one thousand American bishops, priests, and women religious, included 1,340 lay delegates. These laypersons had been officially nominated by their local bishops and represented 152 out of 167 U.S. Catholic dioceses. Also among this lay population were lay leaders from 92 prominent U.S. Catholic nonprofit organizations.

While the planning and hosting of “Call to Action” fell largely on Cardinal Dearden, Msgr. John Egan and his co-chair, Alexis Herman, a laywoman from Mobile, Alabama, managed the actual proceedings on October 20 – 23.219 Egan and Herman

218 Dearden’s address, reprinted by the Quixote Center on the thirtieth anniversary of the conference, 2.
219 Although Herman was just 28 years old at the time, the NCCB recognized her political acumen. Just a few months after the Detroit conference, she accepted President Jimmy Carter’s invitation to serve as Director of the Labor Department’s Women’s Bureau. Among other accomplishments, Herman would go onto chair the 1992 Democratic National Convention and to serve as the 23rd U.S. Secretary of Labor under Bill Clinton.
structured the conference around the eight most pressing themes that had emerged during the national consultations. According to the consultation data, American Catholics were most interested in improving the social justice of (in descending order): Church, Nationhood, Family, Personhood, Neighborhood, Humankind, Ethnicity and Race, and Work.  

By the end of the weekend, the “Call to Action” delegates had passed 182 resolutions. Although these resolutions held no ecclesial authority, the NCCB had previously pledged that it would attempt to implement the resolutions ad experimentum over the following five years.

Egan and Dearden concluded the conference on a tone of promise and hope, but their optimism was abruptly squelched by the subsequent reaction of then-NCCB president Archbishop Joseph Bernardin of Cincinnati. Less than a week after the Detroit conference, Bernardin issued a press statement strongly criticizing the resolutions that Egan, Dearden, and Herman had allowed the delegates to pass. “Too much was attempted,” Bernardin summarized, “and the result was haste and a determination to formulate recommendations on complex matters without adequate reflection, discussion, and consideration of different points of view.” Bernardin reasserted that the resolutions held no ecclesial authority and concluded that, “to be realistic, they must be considered problematical at best.”  

These topics were each subdivided as follows: CHURCH: justice, women, education. ETHNICITY AND RACE: church equality, cultural pluralism, American Indians, racism and discrimination. FAMILY: family values, family and society, divorced Catholics. HUMANKIND: global justice, human rights, nuclear disarmament. NATIONHOOD: political responsibility, public policy, morality. NEIGHBORHOOD: Parish, neighborhood action, community development, rural community. PERSONHOOD: Christian community, personal development, sexuality, Catholic Bill of Rights. WORK: Equal opportunity, economic justice, world of work, lay apostolate.  

Pope Paul VI was relieved by Bernardin’s swift and adept management. In a letter from Cardinal Villot, the Vatican Secretary of State, Bernardin was openly commended for summarily dismissing the Detroit reforms:

I am writing concerning the Call to Action Conference held last October, and the response to the recommendations of this assembly made by the American Hierarchy during their recent meeting in Chicago. I am grateful for the information contained in your letter and the documentation you enclosed. In particular I have noted the clear indication of the intention of the Bishops not to pursue the recommendations, which are at variance with Church teaching or discipline, including the ordination of women, the setting aside of celibacy, the permitting of contraception, etc. I have brought the entire matter and all your work to the personal attention of the Holy Father. His Holiness now directs me to commend you in his name for all that you have done. He appreciate the pastoral service that you have rendered to God’s people in the United States, as well as the able spiritual leadership that you have exercised within the Episcopal Conference itself. He is deeply pleased with your desire to maintain ecclesial communion with the See of Peter and the universal Church.  

Bernardin also removed Egan and Dearden from their NCCB committees, renamed the Call to Action initiative the “To Do the Work of Justice,” and appointed Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Francis of Newark, to head the new body. Bernardin terminated the committee in 1982, without attempting to implement any of the 182 resolutions passed by the Call to Action delegates.

As mentioned, Cardinal Cody had attempted to quiet lay interest in the Call to Action conference among Chicago laypersons, refusing even to sponsor any of the numerous volunteers who had asked his blessing to serve as delegates in Detroit.

Nevertheless, more than four dozen Chicago laypersons had attended the Conference; they were able to bypass Cody by nominating themselves and – instead of identifying as the Chicago delegation – using their credentials as the leaders and former leaders of lay nonprofits in the region. Chief among these de facto Chicago delegates were Dan and Sheila Daley, who had during the prior decade forged a close friendship with Msgr. Egan. Shortly after Bernardin’s public counter-actions, the Daleys reached out to Patty Crowley, Msgr. Egan, and their friends from the (by then defunct) Catholic Interracial Council and the Christian Family Movement, asking them to continue to witness to the Spirit that had guided the lay resolutions in Detroit. The result was a gradual, grassroots reassembly of the former lay Catholic Action leaders in the city under the banner of this new fledgling organization, which appropriately titled itself “the Chicago Call to Action.”

In 1978, this regional community of former CFM activists reconstituted their local ministry under the name “Call to Action.” The core membership was only fifteen couples, but they started a mailing list that quickly attracted more than five thousand Chicago laypersons. It was a community primarily in the imagined sense, coming together physically once a year at conferences that mirrored – in structure and content – the annual gatherings that had been the centerpiece of the Crowley’s Christian Family Movement. After just a few years, the annual CTA Conference drew over 2000 participants. The attendees dinned at the McCormick Convention Center while listening to theologians such as Hans Kung and Joan Chittister deliver keynote addresses. On the Saturday night after the conclusion of each annual conference, Patty Crowley invited the core members of CFM and CIC to a private gathering at her residence. According to Robert McClory, these
parties were “Like Pentecost for a day. The old CFM, the CIC people had stopped seeing each other after Pat’s death. I never imagined everyone together again. It was so spiritually nourishing.”

From CTA to LINKUP and SNAP

The *de facto* continuation of Crowley’s CFM apostolate through the newly-branded Call to Action was an important discovery in my ethnographic and archival research. This local succession through Crowley, from CFM to CTA, has gone unnoticed by prior historians. The implications of this finding, for the broader history of Chicago lay activism and particularly for my narrower case study of the local survivor movement, cannot be overstated. Indeed, the particular theologies espoused and embodied by the activism of Nina Polcyn and Patty Crowley continue to resonate in the contemporary survivor movement, even as they have been appropriated and modified to address the experiences of abuse and betrayal. The influence of CTA, Crowley, and Polcyn on the survivor movement is the focus of Chapter 3.

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223 Robert McClory, interview with the author.
CHAPTER 3

Feminist Personalism and the Theology of the Disenfranchised:

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the direct influence of postconciliar Chicago Catholic action on the three women who founded the Chicago survivor movement: Barbara Blaine (SNAP), Marilyn Steffel (LINKUP), and Jeanne Miller (LINKUP). Prior to their work in the survivor movement, these individuals served as leaders of the third generation of Chicago’s lay apostolate. Blaine founded a Catholic Worker House while simultaneously orchestrating Call to Action’s anti-nuclear protests and supporting the women’s ordination movement. It was through this latter role that Blaine became close friends with Steffel, who was herself an officer of two burgeoning national organizations, the Women’s Ordination Conference and Women of the Church Coalition.

In these respective capacities, the founders of the survivor movement inherited the personalist and liturgical passions of the first two generations of Chicago Catholic action.

To avoid confusion with other prominent nonprofit advocacy groups, VOCAL changed its name in 1992 to LINKUP (the “L” from the acronym VOCAL). In 2004, LINKUP again changed its name to The Healing Alliance. In 2006, The Healing Alliance collapsed as a national movement; remnant communities continued to meet in various locales under names including the Linkup and the Survivor Alliance. For the dual purpose of clarity and for reminding my audience of the significance of the first name the organization chose, I have chosen to use both their original acronym, VOCAL, and their subsequent institutional title, LINKUP, in accordance with the change in these names during the organization’s fifteen year history.
innovators. This inheritance was not disembodied; rather, my research uncovered a direct apostolic succession. Just as O’Neill and Dorothy O’Neil and Day had influenced Polcyn, Polcyn and Crowley trained these three women. After Polcyn retired from St. Benet’s, she returned her attention to the Catholic Worker movement, which is how she came to mentor Blaine. During the same years, Patricia “Patty” Crowley switched her energies to Call to Action and the Women’s Ordination Conference, where she mentored Blaine and Steffel. In a parallel set of events, Jeanne Miller and Blaine met through the local Catholic peace movement. Miller’s commitment to peace began with her decision to join the Blessed Virgin Mary nuns in Dubuque, and culminated in her volunteering for Pax Christi, where she met Blaine. The profound influences of Polcyn and Crowley on these survivor founders cannot be overstated. At the same time, I do not want to oversimplify the divergences and tensions among these five women. The best précis I can provide is, to quote Blaine, these were the women who taught the first survivors “what it means to be Catholic.”

Marilyn Steffel, Woman Priest

Marilyn C. Steffel (b. 1948) grew up in Calumet City, IL, the middle child of three children. Her mother was a switchboard operator for Illinois Bell Telephone Company; her father was a laborer on the refinery lines of the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company. She attended the public schools from kindergarten through high school, and stayed in Calumet City for college, commuting from her parents’ house to the local branch of Purdue

University. In 1969, Steffel graduated with a B.A. in Sociology and Psychology and a minor in education. After college, Steffel wanted to continue her training in psychology, “but from a Catholic perspective.”\textsuperscript{226} From 1970 – 1974, Steffel worked by day as the Religious Education Coordinator at St. Victor Parish in Calumet City; by night, she immersed herself in conversation and books with the nuns who staffed St. Vic’s, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. She was “captivated,” says Steffel, by how scientifically the SNDs were, particularly in their approach to liturgy as a psychosomatic ritual. As the liturgical changes following Vatican II were rolled out, Marilyn drew on the most recent Catholic sociological literature to help her parishioners, and herself, cope with the fast pace of changes in their church. Gradually, her efforts to implement liturgical reforms challenged Steffel’s personal understanding of theology as timeless truth:

In the 1970s, the catechesis around the sacraments changed every few years. It all felt supercilious. I was being asked to stand up there, in good faith, every year and explain to the parents why the theological understanding of the appropriate age for communion and confirmation had changed yet again. It was exhausting. I felt, like, would you men please make up your minds?\textsuperscript{227}

In 1974, Steffel moved to St. Linus Parish in Oak Lawn, Illinois, again serving as the Religious Education Coordinator. Three years later, Steffel became Director of Religious Education at St. Edna’s parish in Arlington Heights. St. Edna’s is one of the largest parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago, and although it was a very long commute for Steffel, she felt invigorated to be working at one of the area’s most affluent and vibrant parishes. At St. Edna’s, Steffel oversaw six full-time salaried staff and more than 200

\textsuperscript{226} Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
\textsuperscript{227} Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
volunteers. Each year, Arlington Heights parents enrolled on average 1,200 students, grades 1 – 8, in Steffel’s youth ministry programs. In addition to weekend and evening classes, Steffel specialized in creating liturgical retreats for children. She and Jeanne Miller became close friends when they designed a new curriculum for those retreats.

Miller was one of Steffel’s four catechetical leaders at St. Edna’s. Steffel recounts, “She was my strongest volunteer – the heart, really, of our youth ministry volunteer corps. She was the sharpest catechistically, and more importantly she was very creative.”

In 1978, the two women created a new summer retreat program called “Close Encounters of God’s Kind.” The “Close Encounters” curriculum reframed metaphysical questions into Bible stories – mostly from the Christian Testament – that engaged children of all ages. Miller and Steffel used different Bible stories to create unique week-long retreats for each grade level. Perhaps because St. Edna’s did not have a parochial school of its own, the two young women were able to pour an immense amount of time and attention into each of these weekly retreats. The three Youth Ministers who led every retreat were Steffel, Miller, and Jeanne’s husband, Tom. (I discuss the Miller family at greater length below.)

The mission of their ministry, as they described it, was to evoke in each child an awakening, “a new love for God.” Steffel and Miller initially tried using Bible retreat materials that they purchased from Protestant bookstores. (“None were available from the Catholic tradition,” Steffel told me.) But they rejected the Evangelical texts, finding them

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228 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
229 This title played, of course, on the kids’ enthusiasm and “craze” for Steven Spielberg’s 1977 blockbuster, Close Encounters of the Third Kind
far “too scary, too militaristic, too harsh for the kids.” What Steffel wanted was “something more mystical,” a phrase she clarified without any prompting from me:

You know, its one thing to tell the kids about God. Its another to get them TO KNOW God, to discover Him in communion with one another, to help them recognize Christ in each one of their classmates. Book learning and weekly Mass is not enough to develop one’s spirituality, to nurture the presence of God in our everyday lives. So I wanted them to have that mystical experience, to learn how to SING the liturgy together – how to be joyous and reflective at the same time.²³⁰

Steffel specialized in these “Close Encounters” for the younger children; Miller, with two adolescent boys of her own, had more of a connection with the middle- and high-school aged kids, knowing firsthand some of their interests and trying to teach them about God through en vogue topics. For the high school retreats, Miller found funding both at St. Edna’s and from the public libraries to purchase audio-visual equipment, including a dozen camcorders, which she gave to the “kids” to make their own film shorts. Miller required them to produce one short film that was a literal reenactment of a Gospel scene, then a lengthier film in which they reinterpreted the scene they had chosen through the modern idiom of their everyday high school experiences. “The kids just loved it!” Steffel recalls. Miller also made costumes and props and helped the groups direct and edit the films, which they shared with the entire program on the retreat’s final evening.

The success of these “Close Encounters” retreats led Steffel and Miller to cofound a private press, which they called Puissance Publications. “It’s French – it means ‘in God

²³⁰ Interview with the author, 19 August 2014. (Her emphasis)
all things are possible,” Steffel explained, “so that’s why we picked it.”

The “press” self-published booklets and guides, usually bound using office-store products such as plastic spines and binders, which were offered for sale by word-of-mouth. According to Miller and Steffel, the Puissance curriculum materials sold tremendously well, and were used by hundreds of other youth ministry programs across the United States.

Less publicly, from 1974 – 1985, Steffel was at the forefront of the Catholic women’s movement in Chicago. Among her other leadership roles, Steffel was an officer at Chicago Catholic Women (CCW), the Women’s Ordination Conference (WOC), and the Women of the Church Coalition (WCC). Steffel was among the founding members of Chicago Catholic Women, a group with forty female members from greater Chicago. Roughly half were consecrated women religious, brought together in December 1974 by the vision of Sinsinawa Dominican Sister Donna Quinn (b. 1937). The idea for CCW, according to Steffel, arose when Quinn attended the 1974 conference of the Chicago Association of Catholic Priests, she candidly asked Dominican Sister Marjorie Tuite (1922 – 1986) “Where is the association for women?”

Other founding members of Quinn’s CCW were Patty Crowley, Sheila Daley, Sr. Margaret Traxler (1916 - 2002), Rosemary

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231 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014. Author’s note on this translation: “Puissance” is French, but its common definition is narrower and generally more straightforward, meaning simply strength, prowess, or power. The French term takes on additional connotations when describing activities as varying as equestrian and computer processing capacity, and those begin to approximate Steffel’s self-understanding of their choice. But closer still would have been a lengthier phrase employing “en puissance,” in relation to “Dieu” (God), and indeed such conjunctions occur frequently in most French translations of the Christian Testament, particularly in the pseudo-Pauline letters. Steffel attributed the idea for this branding to Miller, who in turn could not recall where she got it from.

232 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
Radford Reuther, Judge Sheila Murphy, Sr. Sean Fox, Sr. Rosalie Muschal-Reinhardt, and Sr. Maureen Hickey Reif.

At the December 1974 gathering, which Patty Crowley hosted in her condominium on the 88th floor of the John Hancock skyscraper, the fledgling community followed the Jocist Observe-Judge-Act and decided that the most egregious “observation” was that the National Council of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) had effectively excluded women from the planning committees of their upcoming 1976 Bicentennial Conference, called “Call to Action.” The resultant “action,” spearheaded by Quinn and supported officially by the entire CCW, was to hold a conference just for women, an event at which lay and women religious could together “share testimony” to “help the Bishops of the United States in the formation of social justice policy.”233 The event was held on June 1, 1975, at Holy Name Cathedral, and the CCW members each “gave their testimony” at the pulpit, collectively calling on the Archdiocese to institute an affirmative action committee, add women to the marriage tribunal, and include women in the archdiocesan management of finances.234

Although the “listening session” was sanctioned by the Archdiocese, and drew an audience of more than two hundred laywomen and priests, these voiced grievances resulted in punishment rather than reforms. Cardinal Cody not only rebuked all of CCW’s requests, but also punished the group by excluding every CCW member from the Archdiocesan delegation to the 1976 NCCB “Call to Action Conference” in Detroit. Outraged, CCW

233 ExCHANGE (A quarterly magazine published by the Sinsinawa Dominican Congregation), Spring 1975, 18. Provided to the author by the Father Mazzuchelli Society (Madison, WI).
turned its efforts to publicizing the “Women’s Ordination Conference,” an event first conceived by Sr. Nadine Foley, and organized by Quinn and Tuite. Steffel, Traxler, Reuther and Crowley were likewise among the attendees at the Conference, and they each came to hold board positions in the WOC (the organization that grew out of that 1976 “counter-conference”). Although WOC was technically a national assembly, the overlap between the two grassroots organizations was significant. Fully one third of the 1975 to 1978 WOC membership roster were also CCW members. Like the CFM couples who went onto found Chicago-CTA, CCW sent its own, unsanctioned “delegation” to the 1976 NCCB Conference in Cobo Hall. The women religious of CCW registered under their respective orders, and were allowed to participate in the debates with bishops over women’s ordination, sexist language, the new liturgy, revisions to canon law, and female altar servers. Bishop Charles Buswell, their strongest supporter, presented a CCW draft resolution for women’s ordination to Cardinal Dearden and Msgr. Egan.235

Chicago Catholic Women also held numerous public candle vigils, from 1975 to 1980, that focused on broader national issues of social justice, including the Equal Rights Amendment, employment for disabled and impaired women, insurance for homemakers, and expanding educational opportunities for young black and Latina women.236 Even more than these labor, employment, and health issues, CCW became known for its antinuclear activism. From 1975 to 1976, CCW members effectively staffed the 8th Day Center for Peace and Justice. In 1977, Quinn enticed the Sinsinawa Dominican order to begin

235 Henold, Catholic and Feminist, 188.
236 Henold, Catholic and Feminist, 183.
contributing annual gifts to 8th Day, in excess of $10,000, and to send other sisters to help staff the Center.\(^{237}\) A lesser number of CCW women also volunteered at the Chicago office of Pax Christi.

Through these circles of progressive Catholic activism, Steffel deepened her relationships with Sr. Quinn, Sr. Tuite, and especially Patty Crowley, who became Steffel’s personal confidant and spiritual mentor. Reflecting on her friendship with Crowley, Steffel says, “She taught me how to be Catholic. More than my work at St. Edna’s, my DRE training, my M.A. or my doctoral work, she taught me what faith means.”\(^{238}\) At least one night a week, Steffel left St. Edna’s, braving rush hour traffic on Interstate 90, to join the other CCW, WCC, or WOC committee members (depending on the night) for meetings at Crowley’s downtown condo. Ever the model of Benedictine hospitality, Crowley would always serve a light dinner for the committee meetings. Although she could have easily afforded catering, Crowley, says Steffel, always insisted on preparing the food herself.

Steffel’s fondest memories of the 1970s are of the weekly home Eucharist liturgies that Patty hosted in her living room on the 88th floor of the John Hancock Building.\(^ {239}\)

\(^{237}\) This relationship, not observed before in the secondary literature that I am aware of, sheds light as well on recent events outside of the scope of this monograph. In 2011, for example, Cardinal Francis George chastised 8th Day for their support of women’s ordination, including their alliance with Fr. Roy Bourgeois, a strong female priest advocate who was formally laicized by the Vatican in 2014. During his 2011 tour, local survivor group CCC also hosted Fr. Bourgeois to talk to its members.

\(^{238}\) Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.

\(^{239}\) Famed University of Chicago theologian Martin Marty lived down the hall, and occasionally he and his wife would join the CCW liturgy. Among the many other bonds they shared, the Marty and Crowley households each fostered or adopted more than a dozen orphaned children during these years.
Steffel was unaware of the broader trend of all-female Intentional Eucharistic Communities, which were during these years increasingly common in the Midwest. She and the nuns in CCW experienced Crowley’s vision as prophetic. “Patty was the first one to create a space for us,” Steffel said, “a place for women to come together and worship.” On any given week, eighteen to twenty of CCW’s forty-some members attended Patty’s Eucharist. All of the women were invited to serve as celebrant, but Marilyn was the group’s favorite celebrant, and she eventually became the de facto, “go to” celebrant for most weeks, with the exception of mornings when another woman felt particularly called.

Most of the home liturgy was sung; Steffel was the preferred celebrant because she was, by all accounts, an exceptional cantor. The CCW liturgy followed the same basic leadership format as the Compline had at St. Benet’s, with Eucharistic blessing performed largely as a series of call-and-response chants. As readers will recall, Polcyn had served “bread and wine to nourish the bodies and souls” at St. Benet’s Saturday evening Compline. Crowley’s CCW liturgies were even more explicit in that the women asserted they were consecrating the Eucharist, eating Christ’s flesh and drinking his blood. The call and response likely appealed to the group because all of the women participated equally in the blessing of the wine and the consecration of the host. As Steffel sung the consecration, the others lifted their chalices at her cue, dipped their bread in their wine, and served each other Communion.

Interview with the author, 19 August 2014
Even as these intimate liturgical partners praised Marilyn’s homilies and relished the power of her voice, she began to struggle inwardly with her faith. The associate pastor at St. Edna’s had recently passed away, and the newly-appointed priest, Fr. Robert Mayer, was rude to Marilyn and her staff. In particular, he “viciously teased” Steffel that women’s ordination was the work of the devil, sometimes calling it “a pipe dream” that the men in charge of the Church would never allow. Such taunts by Mayer may explain Steffel’s interest in office gossip about Fr. Mayer. “I began to hear all these rumors,” she explains, “from parents about these parties he was throwing for the high school kids. After the Arlington Heights prom, a bunch of parents who didn’t even belong to St. Edna’s called my office to complain about the fact that, apparently, Fr. Mayer had supplied a number of their kids with pot and alcohol before the dance.”

Concerned, Steffel subsequently refused to assign Fr. Mayer to the overnight events for the “Close Encounters” retreats that summer. Cautious not to spread rumors outside the rectory office, Steffel did not share her concerns with any of the 200 volunteer parents she supervised, not even with her partner, Jeanne Miller. That professional silence contributed to the profound sense of shame and guilt Steffel felt several months later, when Miller came to her with the news that her son had been abused by Mayer.

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241 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
242 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014
Jeanne Miller: The Lay Apostolate of a “Stay at Home Mom”

Miller’s childhood reflected the dramatic spiritual, racial, spatial, and economic reconfiguration of Chicago Catholics during the 1950s and 1960s. Miller’s grandmother, whose maiden name was Stiles, was the matriarch of the family. Grandma Stiles arranged everything from the marriage of Jeanne’s parents to their housing, employment, and eventual divorce, as well as her grandchildren’s parochial education. Born and raised in downtown Chicago, in the 1950s Stiles relocated her family to the northwestern suburbs. She leveraged her sister’s divorce settlement to purchase a plot of land and send her own son to architecture school. When he graduated, Stiles employed her son as both architect and contractor. The family sold the home and then built two more, until – after only a few years in the real estate industry – Stiles was receiving contracts to build entire subdivisions throughout Norridge, Park Ridge, and Des Plaines. (These communities abut the east, northeast, and northern sides of what is now the largest airport in the U.S., O’Hare International.) Stiles and her family represented the broader pattern of white flight. They contributed tangibly to the racial and economic changes that have been critically documented in a number of studies about the shifting centrality of the parish within Chicago Catholicism.  

243 Except where otherwise noted, this biographical information comes from the author’s interviews with Jeanne Miller. 
244 For the best studies of changes to Catholic parish life, see: Steven M. Avella, This Confident Church: Catholic Leadership and Life in Chicago, 1940 – 1965 (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993); Ellen Skerrett, Edward R. Kantowicz, and Steven M. Avella, Catholicism, Chicago Style (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1994); Eileen McMahon, What Parish Are You From: A Chicago Irish Community and Race Relations (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995); John T. McGreevy, Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century Urban North (Chicago: University of Chicago
Miller describes her childhood as a reflection of the material splendor the new suburbs represented:

We moved, almost every year, because we always lived in one of the model homes. I mean, my parents were beautiful people. And they had the perfect family. Beautiful couple. Older son, and then I was the younger daughter with bright, red hair. I remember the newspapers coming in and taking pictures of us in the model homes, showing us off for the advertisements and all that. Every time they built a new subdivision, we would move into a new house. I lived in 14 different model homes by the time I started high school.²⁴⁵

Miller’s grandmother and parents, all Irish Catholics, insisted that she and her brother attend parochial school. Jeanne’s eight years at St. Eugene’s grade school, in Norridge, began her lifelong affinity for Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although the local newspapers portrayed Miller’s family as the embodiment of prosperity and success, drug and alcohol use typified their high-rolling image, in their meetings with clients and especially at the wild parties they routinely hosted in their homes. On the day of Miller’s eighth grade graduation, her mother broke the news that she was divorcing her father. Although Jeanne had spent the last few years fantasizing about attending St. Patrick’s girls’ high school with her current classmates, her mother and grandmother had already rented an apartment in Uptown, the less ritzy neighborhood bordering some of downtown

²⁴⁵ Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
Chicago’s Gold Coast, where she briefly attended St. Immaculata High School for girls. In the spring of her freshman year, Miller’s mother committed suicide. Unable to manage both her business and her grandchildren, Stiles sent Jeanne to a boarding school in Dubuque, IA, Our Lady of Angels Academy, another BVM institution for girls. She forced Miller’s brother, after an unsuccessful junior year at Loyola Academy for boys, to enlist in the U.S. Navy.

These elements of Miller’s childhood are noteworthy for several reasons. First, they help to clarify why Miller felt so empowered as a laywoman after her son was abused. Between her grandmother, whom Miller affectionately describes as “a visionary ahead of her time,” and twelve years of being educated by BVM sisters, Miller spent her entire childhood surrounded by financially- and socially-independent Catholic women. Second, as I will describe in Chapter 6, familial struggles with alcoholism would later become a key trope within the survivor movement, especially as a common lens and vocabulary through which spiritual victims and other victims’ advocates within the survivor community came to relate to the survivors who had also been physically victimized by abusive clergy. Third, Miller’s childhood offers a glimpse into the less-studied world of Chicago Catholics families after they fled from the inner city to the postwar suburbs. Finally, Miller was of the generation of Catholics whose parochial education coincided with the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965).

After graduating from Our Lady of Angels, Miller attended Park College, another BVM institution, while contemplating life as a nun. As Miller explains it, she arrived at the conclusion that she should devote her life to God by reasoning through the traditional
Catholic wisdom that “There's a religious vocation in every family – I knew it wasn't my brother, so it had to be me.” At age 19, Miller entered the BVM “mother house,” the Mt. Carmel convent in Dubuque, Iowa. Given Miller’s longtime education by the BVMs, it is challenging to untangle whether she felt at liberty to contemplate joining other monastic communities or was drawn solely to the BVMs. Founded in 1831 in Dublin, Ireland, the order moved its global headquarters to Dubuque just a decade later, in 1843. The nuns quickly identified education as their chief mission in the Midwest, and opened dozens of boarding schools and small colleges. They founded Immaculata High School in Chicago in 1867. More than fifty years later, in 1931, the order started Mundelein College for women (now part of Loyola University). During Miller’s formative years, the BVMs were best known for their racial and peace activism. Through boycotts, vigils, nonviolent demonstrations, and civil disobedience, they participated in Chicago’s broader race and peace protests. In 1965, the Dubuque convent sent seventeen sisters to march with the protesters in Selma. In 1968, the order officially adopted “peace and the preferential option for the poor” as its core missions. In 1972, the Mt. Carmel sisters again made national headlines by staging a series of rituals through which they consecrated broad swaths of prairie and farmland in Iowa and Illinois as “nuclear-free zones.” Although decidedly less militant than the Plowshares Movement, the BVMs’ joint focuses on peace and poverty reflected their affinity for the Catholic counterculture of their day.

Of the 42 women that entered the convent that year, only Miller and one other woman had some collegiate education, which gave them a number of small freedoms.

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246 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
compared to other novices, such as the privilege of driving elderly nuns to their doctors’ appointments downtown. These off-campus excursions made a heavy dent in Miller’s resolve to enter the life of women religious. As she recalled:

We would walk down Main Street together, the two of us. We were always in pairs. And people would stop to ask us to listen to the most intimate details of their lives, and their problems, and then they would hand us money. I felt like I hadn’t earned that. I hadn’t earned the right to have their respect and to learn those kind of things. It was just because I was wearing the habit.\textsuperscript{247}

At the beginning of the summer of her second year at the convent, Miller joined her classmates in throwing a Fourth of July picnic atop the bluff in front of the Mother House, which sat atop a bluff on the Mississippi River. But she felt lonely, and isolated. Standing on the bluff, overlooking the secular festivities below, “I looked down, and I had a lemonade in one hand, and a sparkler in the other, and I thought – ‘Damn, what I really want is a martini and a sparkler.’”\textsuperscript{248} That evening, Miller spoke to her Mother Superior about desiring a lifestyle that was more public and less reclusive. She left Dubuque on a train to Chicago the next morning.

After returning to her hometown, Miller quickly settled down with John, a young man who she admired, foremost, for his faith. “He was a deeply religious, deeply spiritual man.”\textsuperscript{249} After their wedding, the couple became increasingly involved in lay ministries at their church, St. Edna’s parish in Arlington Heights, IL. John served St. Edna’s as a youth minister, teen retreat leader, Eucharistic minister, and cantor. After they had the first of

\textsuperscript{247} Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
\textsuperscript{248} Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
\textsuperscript{249} Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
what would be four children – two boys, then two girls – Jeanne devoted herself solely to her household and the church. A self-described, “stay at home mom,” Jeanne spent the middle hours of each day at St. Edna’s, where she served as the master catechist for their religious education program (informally known as Sunday school), which at that time enrolled approximately 1,600 children from the neighboring five public schools. Jeanne also directed theatre and musical programs at the parish and several local high schools. Once her youngest daughter started first grade, Jeanne decided to go back and finish her bachelor’s degree. She enrolled in Mundelein College’s lakeside campus, in Rogers Park (subsequently purchased by Loyola University), which was just beginning to offer its first evening and weekend courses in continuing education. The women religious in Mundelein’s administration were impressed with Jeanne’s résumé, and they arranged to give her course credit towards Theatrical Arts degree in recognition of all the plays and short films she had directed as part of the “Close Encounters” retreats. Miller says she “felt proud of [her]self and was ready to start a real career.”

Just two months later, Miller’s life plummeted from hope to despair. In 1982, Miller’s son Tom, age 13, began expressing an interest in becoming a priest. In response, the Millers encouraged Tom to spend more time with Fr. Robert Mayer, the recently appointed assistant pastor at St. Edna’s. They had no knowledge of the complaints Steffel received about Mayer inviting teens to parties at the rectory: “All I knew,” she recalls, “is

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250 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
251 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
that all the boys seemed to like him.” At the same time, the Miller’s younger son, age 11, was also spending a few hours each week with Mayer in the formal preparation classes for becoming an altar boy. Miller says she and her husband “were thrilled” when Mayer invited Tom to go on a camping trip to his lakeside cabin. But “nothing could have prepared us,” she says, “for what Tom told us the week after he got home.”

Tom told his parents that Mayer had groped him in the lake, and held his head underwater when he had tried to resist. Tom also described less violent moments on the trip, in which Mayer had exposed himself, peed in front of the boys, encouraged the teens to ski nude, and encouraged the boys to wrestle in their underwear. Mayer also had the boys rotate beds, with two of them sharing his bunk each night. The Millers were shocked. “I didn't want to believe it at first,” she says. “When I talked to my son, and he told me what happened, I didn't want to believe it. It was too painful.” Within the week, Miller learned that he was not alone.

Miller’s inquiry began with her closest community of friends within the parish, the staff members in the religious education program. Marilyn Steffel immediately offered that she had received similar complaints from other parents against Mayer, who had flatly denied the allegations when she had confronted him. An anonymous man had also called Marilyn’s office with the ominous warning, “You should know, his nickname was ‘Satan’ in our seminary.” Steffel confessed to Jeanne that she had heard rumors about teenagers visiting Mayer’s rectory at odd hours of the night, including non-Catholic children from

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252 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
253 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
254 Interview with the author, 19 August 2014.
the neighborhood. Still, Miller and Steffel decided that they could not rely on such vague rumors, and Jeanne “held out hope” that Mayer’s attack on her son had just been a figment of his imagination.

Next, Miller learned that clergy within her own parish knew of Mayer’s transgressions. Miller approached the retiring pastor at St. Edna’s, Fr. Walter Somerville, whom she trusted dearly. “I fully expected him to say, ‘You know, Jeanne, this guy’s weird, but I don’t think he’s that weird.’” To Miller’s shock, Somerville was unsurprised by the story. Instead, Somerville counseled her, “Fr. Mayer has a problem with young boys. You need to pursue this, Jeanne.” At that point, Miller says, “My world began to shatter.” She was barely able to imagine that a priest, any priest, would harm a child in that way. The revelation that seminary classmates and older priests knew that this priest had a reputation for harming children was utterly incomprehensible to her.

Miller’s habit of documenting evidence of abuses began in these early years, as a personal effort to stem the fear and confusion she felt. She started a notebook, where she recorded each of her conversations regarding her son’s story. Two days after the warning from Fr. Somerville, Miller and her husband received a telephone call in the middle of the night. It was Fr. Mayer. According to Miller, Mayer shouted at her, threatening legal action, “You can’t go around saying these things about me! I’m a priest! I am going to call my family’s lawyer. I am going to sue you for slander and libel.” Today, Miller reflects

\[\text{255 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.}\]
\[\text{256 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.}\]
\[\text{257 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.}\]
\[\text{258 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.}\]
on that telephone call as the moment she should have known that Tom’s story was not fabricated. “In my line of work, I’ve learned that when somebody is that desperate,” she says, “it usually means they’re culpable.”

Back then, Miller was not the high-powered attorney she is today. In fact, she claims, she had to consult a dictionary to look up the meaning of “libel.”

As with other survivor accounts, Miller’s narrative portrays legal action as a final resort resulting from the Church’s unwillingness to act in the face of her family’s suffering, resisted until she discovered proof that widespread and systematic abuse was taking place. At this point, Miller and her husband still “had not considered going to the police, or taking legal action, or any of that stuff. We just wanted to know whether he had actually abused Tom.”

Miller’s soul burned with the desire that everyone was exaggerating, that “Mayer was just a weirdo,” but not a child molester. Until my conversation with her, Miller has never revealed the story of how she came to know that her son was telling the truth: her father served as her informant inside the rectory.

Miller had spent most of her adulthood distant from her father. He was living in California with a girlfriend and continued to struggle with the alcoholism that turned her childhood upside down. One autumn morning in 1980, she received an urgent call from his partner, who had just booked her father a one-way ticket to Chicago. She was exasperated with managing his alcohol abuse. Jeanne called her brother, but he refused to help. “It just wouldn’t be fair to my family,” he said. Jeanne knew she also could not take her father to

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259 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
260 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
her house. Instead, she turned to the staff at St. Edna’s for help. Steffel drove Jeanne to
pickup her father from O’Hare, where he was wheeled out of the terminal by airline staff
because he was too inebriated to walk. They drove him to the emergency room, and
Steffel made special arrangements to have him checked into an alcohol rehabilitation
center. Miller was only partly relieved; her family’s $28,000 annual income was already
stretched thin. They could not afford his treatment. Discerning her stress, Fr. Somerville
approached Miller before Sunday Mass. “It’ll be OK, Jeanne. We have emergency funds
for this kind of thing.”  

Parish funds paid for all of the medical costs. Towards the end of
her father’s time at the rehab center, Somerville visited regularly and offered him a deal. If
her father stayed sober, Somerville promised, then he could secure full-time employment
for him. Miller’s father held his side of the bargain, and Somerville made him the janitor at
St. Edna’s. The experience was trying for Miller, but it secured her trust and affection
towards Somerville. “On the surface,” Miller explains, Somerville “was gruff, abrupt,
grouchy, even mean. Few people got to know him like I did.”

In 1982, two years after her father’s medical crisis and just after the camping trip,
Miller asked him to keep tabs on Mayer, who apparently had never made the connection
between the janitor and Jeanne’s children. Miller’s father shifted his schedule so that he
could clean the rectory at night. He took note of the children coming and going, and he
wrote down the memorable license plate of a priest who arrived several evenings in a black
limousine, “JC 1.” One night, he heard screams from Mayer’s bedroom, and – pretending

261 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
262 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
that he was fearful for Mayer’s health – he entered the room, to find Mayer in bed with a twelve-year-old boy. It was at this point that Miller finally admitted that Tom’s assault had occurred. Through Fr. Somerville, she contacted the Archdiocesan office, which ultimately sent a “pastoral team” to investigate her complaint.

Fr. Raymond Goedert, the man Joseph Cardinal Bernardin tasked to manage allegations of priestly sexual misconduct from at least as early as 1982, led the team. After observing Goedert’s handling of Jeanne Miller’s complaint, Bernardin promoted him to Vicar of Priests in 1987 and then to Vicar General in 1995. To Miller’s horror, Goedert never acknowledged her family’s suffering or asked after Tom. Miller asked the diocese for an apology and for Mayer to be removed from active ministry. She recalls that financial compensation was the furthest thing from her mind. The bishop responded by threatening Miller with excommunication, claiming that she was violating Canon Law by bringing these unsubstantiated allegations against an honest pastor. Isolated from parish friends and ignored in her appeals to meet with Cardinal Bernadin, Miller felt backed into a corner. As she describes it, contacting an attorney was her family’s last resort. They filed suit on Christmas Eve, 1982.

Miller doubted whether the courtroom was the right venue for her grievances. “By suing the Church, was I going against God?” she asked herself. The legal bills exceeded the family’s annual income. She sold her jewelry, asked neighbors for work, and humbly accepted food donations from the handful of parishioners who secretly supported her. After

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two years, the Millers settled with the Archdiocese for $15,800, less than half of their legal expenses. Fr. Mayer was transferred to three additional Chicago parishes, where he continued to abuse children. Subsequent Mayer victims brought civil suit against the Archdiocese of Chicago in 2006 and 2008, which resulted in settlements of $6.65 million and $12.7 million, respectively.264

According to Miller, she and her husband settled her son’s suit because they wanted something that no Cook County judge could order, a one-on-one meeting with the Cardinal.265 Miller wanted Bernardin to hear the story of her suffering in person. She believed Bernardin would acknowledge her son’s abuse, or at least her family’s pain. Jeanne asked her lawyer to make it her only request, and the Cardinal assented. At the beginning of their visit together, the Cardinal repeated Goedert’s suggestion:

So finally after we settled, when we had our meeting with Joe, he suggested again that we might want seal the record to protect the boys. And I said, "OK. I’m tired of arguing about that. We’ll seal the record. But here’s what’s going to happen. You have already moved him to another parish. And when he gets in trouble there, you’ll move him again. If he abuses kids again, if I find out about it, I'm gonna be in front of a camera. So, that was the deal. That was my deal with Joe.266

In 1985, less than six months after that meeting, the Des Plaines police knocked on Miller’s door. They had received a complaint against Mayer from a parent at his new parish, St. Stephen’s, and the Arlington Heights police had suggested they speak to Miller for background information. “As soon as the police left, I called Joe,” Miller recalls. “I told

265 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
266 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
him that apparently Mayer was in trouble again, and he said, ‘Don’t worry Jeanne. I’ll take care of it.’”

Bernardin’s solution was to transfer Mayer to St. Dionysus. Miller felt “enraged.” She wanted “to out” Mayer on local television, but her husband “just wanted to move on,” she says. Their divergent impulses on the issue started to tear their marriage apart. “We had spent two years trying to figure out what happened, but we still hadn’t dealt with it. We settled the lawsuit, but the spiritual pain was still there.” He “wanted to embrace his church,” and “said he refused to let anyone force him out of his church, but I couldn’t do it,” she recalls. Miller and her husband separated, and two years later they legally divorced. It was tough on the kids, but also tough on Jeanne. She became consumed by “the nightmare,” she told me, “that I was headed down the same road as my mother.”

In an effort to fill the void of what the Mass had once meant for her, what church was for her, Miller enrolled in the master’s program in theology at Mundelein College. “It was wonderful therapy!” Miller exclaims, looking back, “It was great for the purging! I learned that I can have my spirituality, I can have my beliefs, but all of this stuff – like these made-up rules, like celibacy, that’s not historically authentic – I don’t have to buy all

267 Bernardin then transferred Mayer to St. Dionysus, which had a much smaller grade school attached to the parish. It was Fr. Mayer’s seventh parish in twenty years of in the archdiocese. Two years later, Mayer would be transferred to St. Odillo parish.
268 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
269 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
270 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
271 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
272 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
of that stuff. I don’t need the institution.”273 At Mundelein, Miller completed a thesis about the scope of the problem of clergy sexual abuse across the United States. Bolstered by the experience, she turned to publishing her son’s story as a book.

By day, Miller worked at the law offices of Nancy Kaszak, the attorney who had represented the two St. Edna boys’ families against the Archdiocese. By night, Miller worked diligently to transcribe the notebook she had kept in 1982 and 1983 into Assault on Innocence, a thinly-fictionalized account of her experience trying to remove Mayer from ministry, under the nom de plume Hillary Stiles. The pseudonym was important to Miller.

Tom was being bullied in high school. The older kids were frustrated that Mayer’s departure had eliminated their easiest source of alcohol, so they roughed up Tom in the bathrooms. In an attempt to disguise her gender, Miller chose “Hilary” out of a list of androgynous names she had compiled. The surname, “Stiles,” was, of course, the maiden name of Jeanne’s grandmother, the real estate tycoon and family matriarch. For the cover art, Miller enlisted her brother, who rented a collar and posed, his face obscured by shadows, as an abusive priest.274

Miller’s publicist booked promotional appearances that included Good Morning America, The Oprah Winfrey Show, and Larry King Live. Miller took pains to disguise her physical appearance as well, hazel eyes hidden under blue contacts, her bright red hair tucked under a black wig.275 Through this alter ego, Miller used daytime television talk

273 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
274 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
shows to reach other survivors, capitalizing on the public interest in her family’s ordeal and amplifying her appeal through this striking persona. Miller was the first public voice of the survivor movement, and she became the paradigm for the community’s subsequent understanding of public speaking as an intrinsic component of their healing journey.

After the book’s success, Miller began using her real name in advocacy work on behalf of survivors. She married a lawyer from her office. She launched the first survivor telephone hotline, which Miller envisioned as a way for her to support victims that she could not meet with personally. Occasionally, she cross-referenced her professional database to find a sympathetic attorney in that survivor’s area. Although Miller encouraged survivors to reach out to others who may have been hurt, she never shared the names of callers with other victims. The power of the early survivor community was thus largely in Jeanne’s assurance that these victims were not alone. Several victims describe speaking to her on the telephone as the moment when they began to feel empowered and less ashamed. They realized that they were part of a safe community built around the ineffability of this generational horror. One of the women who heard Miller’s voice, and then picked up the phone, was Barbara Blaine.

**Barbara Blaine: Founder of St. Elizabeth’s House of Hospitality**

Barbara Blaine (b. 1956), one of eight siblings, was born into a devout Catholic family in Toledo, Ohio. Her father was president of the parish council at St. Pius X on the city’s west side. Rita, Blaine’s mother, led the parish’s chapter of the Altar and Rosary Society, through which she taught Barbara and her sisters to try to follow the example of
the Blessed Virgin. “It wasn’t unusual,” Blaine says, “for all ten of us to be [at the parish] seven days a week. It was the place we felt most secure.”

Young Barbara felt certain she would become a nun. Her dad encouraged her to shoot even higher, telling her that he thought she could become “the first woman priest.” In the sixth grade, Barbara joined a group of junior high girls called ‘The Deaconettes’ whose job was to clean up after Mass. “It was a special honor,” Blaine recalls, particularly because it was the only role available to young women which granted them access to the most sacred spaces within the church – the altar, the tabernacle, and the sacristy.

In the summer of 1969, Blaine had just finished seventh grade; she was thirteen years old. Blaine began to visit her assistant pastor, Fr. Chet Warren, to discuss her vocational calling. Warren had been ordained in 1957 as a priest within the teaching order of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales (OFDS). Most OFDSs in Toledo lived in a common house and taught at the adjacent St. Frances de Sales High School. Instead, Warren was assigned to teach at St. Pius instead of living in the OFDS Toledo house. As the summer wore on, the Blaine family welcomed Fr. Warren’s offer to drive Barbara to

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278 Blaine, quoted in Bill Frogameni, Toledo City Paper, “Toledo Native Barbara Blaine Crusades against Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Church, 29 April 2004.
279 I use Chet Warren’s real name, without my standard practice of including the qualifier “alleged,” because he was subsequently defrocked and convicted in Ohio criminal court for abuse against other women who brought allegations against him. By the time Blaine brought forward her allegations, the Ohio statutes of limitations for bringing both civil and criminal charges had expired. Warren has thus not ever been tried or convicted on the basis/merit of Blaine’s allegations against him. On Warren’s conviction and sentencing, see for example, David Yonke, “Priest charged,” The Toledo Blade, April 28, 2004; Robin Erb, “Bishop offers abuse apology,” The Toledo Blade, 14 March 2005.
and from youth ministry events and evening masses. The arrangement was convenient for everyone. Blaine’s parents adored Fr. Warren, inviting him over for dinner, and asking him to visit every Sunday afternoon to administer the Blessed Sacrament to Barbara’s grandmother. After one such communion trip, Warren invited Barbara to drive back to join him and the other priests for Sunday night dinner at the rectory. Barbara and her parents were delighted, never hesitating to accept Warren’s invitation.

Three other priests attended dinner that evening. After the meal, the group watched television together. As the evening wore on, the other priests filtered out of the living room, leaving Warren and Blaine alone together. Blaine became self-conscious of Warren’s eyes, which seemed stuck on her legs rather than the television set. Warren started talking to Barbara about his feelings for her, and he insisted “he knew” that the attraction was mutual. Warren, then age 41, shut the blinds, began kissing Barbara, and then began fondling her. “It was really confusing,” to Blaine, both physically and spiritually. Warren invoked their faith in justifying his advances, telling Blaine that she “was holier than other kids and closer to Jesus than other kids.”

In shock, Blaine did not resist. She has described the experience publically several times:

I kind of froze. I didn’t move, and I didn’t say a word. I can remember in my mind saying ‘No! Don’t do that – don’t touch me there,’ but that’s not what I said. No words came out. I was just in shock. I remember him saying, ‘Stop shaking, I’m not going to hurt you. You don’t have to be frightened.’ Then he said nobody would understand because none of them were as holy and close to Jesus as we were, and somehow, this was blessed by Jesus. I felt guilty. Ashamed. Dirty. And embarrassed. He almost didn’t have to warn me because I wasn’t going to tell

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Chet and Blaine continued to have sexual relations regularly from 1969 to 1974. Each time, he sent Blaine to confession, “because he insisted people would become suspicious if I didn’t take communion, and of course I couldn’t take communion after because what we were doing was a mortal sin.” When her family asked Barbara where she was spending all of her time, she lied. Blaine grew distant from her family, and from her high school friends. She wanted to be friends with boys, maybe even to go on a few dates, but “Chet would get terribly jealous and mean. So it was easier just to stay away from boys.” In other statements, Blaine has put this dynamic slightly differently, adding, “I didn’t date. I didn’t go out. I didn’t do a lot of things because he wanted me to be available for him.”

In 1974, Blaine was a senior at Notre Dame Academy. At a class retreat to prepare for graduation, Blaine first spoke of her abuse. In confession with a priest she had never met, Blaine revealed her sex life with Warren. The priest was consoling, but expressed no pastoral concern for the unequal power relations that another priest had leveraged in abusing her. According to Blaine, the confessor’s response was, “Barbara, its OK. Jesus loves you. Jesus can forgive anything.” Blaine found these words liberating. The retreat restored her sense of self-worth and self-esteem. When she returned to west Toledo, Blaine

284 Blaine quoted in Rubin, op cit, 28 April 2002.
assertively told Warren that their relationship was over, “That’s it,” she recalls saying simply, “This isn’t happening anymore.”

Blaine wanted to get out of Ohio, far away from Warren and her family. But she remained devoutly Catholic. From 1974 to 1978, Blaine completed a B.A. in social work at St. Louis University, a Catholic college. In 1980, also at St. Louis, she completed a Master’s in Social Work. After receiving her MSW, Blaine volunteered as a lay missionary to Jamaica, where she taught for free at a missionary grade school. Missing the States, she reached out to the Dayton, Ohio branch of Pax Christi, a Catholic peace organization. The Dayton office responded that the organization’s Chicago office had an opening. In 1981, Blaine moved to the Edgewater neighborhood on the city’s north side. Through Pax Christi, Blaine met Gary Olivero, a passionately devout Catholic with whom she hesitantly began her first serious romantic relationship since Warren.

Blaine and Olivero inspired one another. They scraped money together to rent an eight-bedroom house near Loyola University, and informally started their own Catholic Worker house. Without diocesan financial support, Olivero and Blaine worked full time to cover the house’s expenses. In the tradition of voluntary poverty within the Worker, they kept only $10 per week for themselves. Blaine struggled with the responsibilities of both the house and a day job. She quit Pax Christi and meditated on her calling, deciding that it was her vocation to minister to broken bodies, particularly to broken women. In fall 1982, Blaine started a new job, staffing the night shift at a north side battered women’s shelter funded through Cook County. Today, Blaine’s self-understanding is that this ministry was

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the first way for her to reflect on her abuse. At the time, the only thing she recognized was that she was “attracted to people who had more problems than I did.”

Looking back on the 1980s, Blaine feels something more reciprocal and profound in her relationship with the women she helped. “Dealing with people who showed their woundedness made me confront my own woundedness. Helping them enabled me to challenge my pain. The work was consoling and healing.”

The women’s shelter was located in the affluent near north side Uptown neighborhood of Chicago. Although consistently funded, it only provided temporary shelter for women. Blaine preferred the Worker model, in which the homeless were formally considered “guests,” and could remain residents in community indefinitely, sometimes for years or until their deaths.

In summer 1982, Blaine took time off to travel the Midwest with Olivero. It was a religious road trip, a pilgrimage to the poor. They travelled “to about thirteen or fourteen different Worker houses in a period of a few weeks.” Blaine and Olivero were awed by the pain, suffering, and poverty they witnessed. Some of the rural houses made the Chicago Catholic Worker houses seem downright luxurious. “I still think you can only feel what a Catholic Worker is,” Blaine explained, “by actually being there.”

When they returned to Chicago, Blaine and Olivero decided to expand their House of Hospitality into a larger facility. They recognized the abundance of vacant archdiocesan properties in downtown Chicago, and formally petitioned Cardinal Bernardin for help.

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289 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
The ensuing fight over diocesan land became Blaine’s first grievance with the Cardinal. The archdiocese was equivocal in responding to Blaine’s persistent appeals for an abandoned Church property. “After a whole lot of negotiations and false hopes,” she said, “Bernardin finally offered us a rectory on the South side.”

The property given for the new Worker house was one of the buildings on the recently-shuttered campus of St. Therese’s convent in the Back of the Yards, a formerly-Irish area that had become notorious in the 1950s and 1960s as emblematic of the economic collapse that had plagued inner city neighborhoods following the influx of immigrants and corresponding white flight to the suburbs. The diocese had successfully sold the adjacent church, formerly Little Flower Parish, to a Black Protestant congregation that in turn complained, increasingly over the following decade, about the paltry state of the abandoned convent residences.

Blaine had hoped the diocese would give her a location in a white part of town. She resisted accepting the building at St. Therese on S. Honore St. “I didn’t want to move to the South Side,” Blaine later confided, “Most of the women [who I wanted to invite from the Uptown shelter] were white. The South Side is all black. It’s like moving to a new city. And all our support was up on the north side. So I figured we’d lose all that… And like have to re-acculturate ourselves.”

After “praying on it” for a couple of weeks, Olivero and Blaine decided that this must be His work: “We had this sense that God was really

290 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
291 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
calling us to the South Side,” Blaine said, adding, “Dorothy always said if its meant to be, God blesses the work.”

Blaine accepted the archdiocese’s generosity, and they chose the name St. Elizabeth’s in honor of the ministry of Elizabeth Ann Baley Seton to widowed women and children. But she still hated the convent building. Blaine remembers the convent as “filthy,” with broken windows, rat infestations, and pantries of food that had been left rotting throughout the prior eight years of vacancy. Even after months of cleaning, Blaine still found the premises, “Gross. I mean, that’s the only word to describe it. Absolute rule by roaches.” The St. Elizabeth’s House of Hospitality officially opened in 1983. Most of its initial residents were women that Blaine personally invited to move there from the Uptown women’s shelter. By her own account, Blaine saved these women. Without St. Elizabeth’s, she said, “most would be back on the street. They wouldn’t be capable of getting themselves together and making it on their own.”

As word of St. Elizabeth’s spread, new guests arrived each week. The former convent had thirty-five bedrooms and, by 1985, Olivero and Blaine housed 50 full-time residents. When there was a vacancy, Blaine gave preference to single mothers and their children, a de facto policy that aided in her admitted goal (discussed below) of keeping the number of grown men in the house to a minimum. Within any given cycle, she estimated,

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292 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
293 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
294 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
295 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
there were usually 5 to 6 men, 12 to 15 women, and upwards of 30 children living at St. Elizabeth’s. Olivero and Blaine also served community meals to up to 75 people each night, and ran an emergency pantry that distributed food to several hundred local residents each year.\(^{296}\)

Blaine’s life took a dramatic turn in the autumn of 1985. In cleaning out back issues of magazines and newspapers at St. Elizabeth’s, she came across a *National Catholic Reporter* article that had been published in July, now several months past, by a reporter named Jason Berry. The 8,000 word article was excerpted by NCR from Berry’s reporting on the trial of Fr. Gilbert Gauthe.\(^ {297}\) The Gauthe case captivated national attention, and NCR was just one of many periodicals to begin syndicating his pieces, which had begun appearing in May in a small Cajun newspaper called *The Times of Acadiana*. Berry’s *NCR* piece was accompanied by a four-page commentary by the NCR editors.\(^ {298}\) Reading the article brought back strong memories, and over the following days Blaine was plagued by a series of increasingly serious panic attacks. She found Jason Berry’s telephone number and called the reporter for help. Berry, in turn, called Rev. Thomas P. Doyle, the Dominican priest who had, as a secret whistleblower, become his go-to source for information on just how much the Church had known about Gauthe’s history of child abuse. Doyle then referred Blaine to another Chicago woman with whom he had been working closely over the prior two years, Jeanne Miller.

\(^{296}\) Interview with the author, 26 February 2013.


That night, using one of two communal telephone lines at St. Elizabeth’s, Barbara called Jeanne. For Blaine, the conversation was transformative. Aside from that one priest in the confessional, she had never told anyone else about her abuse. Miller listened compassionately, for more than an hour, as Blaine recalled her relationship with Warren. Miller encouraged Blaine to talk to her friends and family. That same week, Blaine’s life partner and coworker, Gary Olivero, was killed in a car accident, overrun by a tractor-trailer on a trip to pickup food for their emergency pantry from a downstate Catholic Charities distribution center. For Blaine, the tragedy and the newfound memories of abuse were too much to handle. She entered a deep, suicidal depression that she would gradually climb out of as she spoke with friends and family over the following months. But the first place Blaine turned was to her closest group of female friends, the women with whom she broke bread each week, in Patty Crowley’s Intentional Eucharistic Community.

**Barbara Blaine: Woman Priest**

By that point, Blaine had known Steffel for three years. The two were among the forty-some women in Chicago Catholic Women. Although she never served in such prominent roles as Steffel, Blaine was also involved in the Women’s Ordination Conference. Steffel had been withholding from CCW, even from Crowley, the devastating experiences that she and Miller had been going through at St. Edna’s. Steffel had invited Miller to join CCW, but Miller was never comfortable with the idea of female priests. Blaine, on the other hand, seems to have taken quite seriously her dad’s encouragement that women might one day perform the Eucharistic liturgy.
Blaine has been very reluctant to talk to me about this aspect of her life. Although more open about her vision in founding St. Elizabeth’s, and even her reliance on Nina Polcyn (discussed below), Blaine has declined on several occasions to comment further on her involvement with CCW and WOC. My speculation – but it is just that – is that Blaine has very carefully tried to control her media image. Although cast as an angry survivor, she has forged intimate friendships with journalists such as Berry who have, in turn, characterized her as a shy and otherwise obedient, devoted Catholic. Here, I am not arguing against that interpretation, per se, so much as presenting a set of facts that might be interpreted as evidence that Blaine has always been suspicious of the male hierarchy, even before she recognized Warren’s actions as child sexual abuse. In the absence of commentary from Blaine, I turned to an oral history tape, archived at Marquette University, in which she spoke in 1989 to a fellow Catholic Worker in honor of Dorothy Day. The cassette recording contains a number of comments that help shed light on the likely appeal of WOC and CCW to her during these years.

In the recording, Blaine described her affection for “goddess spirituality” in contrast to “the patriarchal flow of society.” “That’s what turned a lot of people off,” she explained, “So much is built on patriarchal worship. Or at least connected to the institutional patriarchal church.” Drawing on her positive experiences of female church in Crowley’s group, Blaine reflected:

What draws me into the desire to pray with women is the need for healing… We needed healing from someone or something hurting us, or from the pain we’ve

299 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
caused to someone else. We shared that with one other person, then we symbolically washed each other with water. Then we each said a prayer for our partner, praying for the healing that the person needed. It was just real powerful… It seemed really radical… The very nature of gathering and sharing your stories is real feminine, and something men find difficult to do.”

Likewise reflecting on the contrast between her experience as a Worker and her liturgies with Crowley, Blaine said, “A liturgy isn’t always a Mass. It’s a gathering of people to worship together… I’d like to think that we as members of this movement, can pray together. Can feel connected in worship.” While she was involved in Crowley’s IEC, Blaine enrolled in the University of Chicago Divinity School, where she ultimately completed an M.Div. Although not an uncommon route for women, the M.Div. is a ministry degree, and it is unclear whether Blaine considered leaving the Roman rite to become a pastor in another denomination. In our conversations, she has only revealed, “I tried attending other denominations, but they just weren’t for me.”

Blaine’s mistrust of men extended beyond the clerical hierarchy. She tried to limit the number of men at St. Elizabeth’s. The oral history recording made more explicit her logic for doing so:

I can’t stand men around the house during the day. Women and children can stay all day, but the men have to go out between nine and five… We wanted women to feel safe and secure, and we wanted it to be a nice place for them. Men in the household… I mean, it’s been our experience that when men stay in the house, they do nothing except sit around and make a mess. Just sit there and smoke and drink

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300 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
301 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
302 Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
coffee. They don’t do anything to clean up.\textsuperscript{303}

This is not to suggest that Blaine dislikes all men. She used to be outspoken, in fact, about the Church’s failure to minister to gay men. “Dorothy would have fed, clothed, and loved a homosexual,” said Blaine, “She’d respond personally and that’s what the Catholic Worker is – that feeling response- ‘Love is the solution.’”\textsuperscript{304} Asked why the lay apostolate hasn’t been able to sway the hierarchy on the issue of homosexuality, Blaine responded, “I imagine that people who go along with the institution don’t see homosexuals as victims. The Catholic Worker offers sanctuary, in a sense. We offer a space for Workers. We should be able to offer a space who have been victimized by the institution, too.”\textsuperscript{305}

Setting aside for a moment Blaine’s involvement in WOC and CCW, I want to shift my focus instead to her understanding of the Catholic Worker as a movement for victims, because that conviction led Blaine to found SNAP. Despite how Blain routinely characterizes SNAP when she speaks to reporters, it was not founded as a secular nonprofit organization. Rather, for its first five years, Blaine understood her self-help group for victims of clergy sexual abuse as a ministry of the Catholic Worker.

“A Preferential Option for Victims of Abuse”

In 1986, Blaine returned to Toledo and confronted Warren. She also told her family about her experience, and they rallied in support of her. Through a somewhat dramatic

\textsuperscript{303} Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.

\textsuperscript{304} Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.

\textsuperscript{305} Blaine, Barbara. 2 Cassettes. Catholic Worker Oral History Collection. W-9.1. Box 5, Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Marquette University.
exchange of public back-and-forths, Blaine’s abuse was gradually acknowledged by the Oblates of St. Francis de Salles and the Archdiocese of Toledo. Father Warren remained in active ministry until 1989, when his pastoral privileges were rescinded by the Toledo OFDSs. Blaine claims Warren’s removal was the direct result of her threatening to name the incumbent archbishop on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* for his failure to remove a known pedophile from the active ministry. To this day, Warren has not been officially laicized (a formal process that begins at the level of the order or diocese and requires, ultimately, a decision from the Vatican). Several news reports alleged that Warren continued to wear his collar in public and that he ministered to congregations of other churches. In 1995, Blaine settled out of court for the sum of $80,000; the Oblates and the Archdiocese of Toledo split the cost of the settlement.  

During the decade preceding this settlement, Blaine had founded several small self-help communities in metropolitan areas across the country. These self-help meetings, which she came to brand as the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), began simply as monthly gatherings of survivors, hosted at Catholic Worker houses, and patterned explicitly around the structure and etiquette of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings.

For its first three years, SNAP existed solely as a monthly ministry at St. Elizabeth’s house. Blaine imagined the group as a therapeutic complement to the activist work Jeanne Miller was doing. Miller and Steffel were concerned primarily with finding and educating victims. Blaine was more interested in small group meetings and private therapy sessions, where she and other local victims shared their pain. Note here that –

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among other differences – Blaine originally conceived of SNAP as exclusively for broken victims, whereas Steffel and Miller sought to include parents, spouses, politicians, psychiatrists, and lawyers. Based on my conversations with these three women, my conclusion is that – in those early years, at least – these cofounders spoke past one another more than overtly criticizing each others’ approach. “Barbara’s whole thing was just to listen to the victims, but I didn’t have time for that,” Steffel told me, adding, “I mean, it’s like, OK, Jeanne has already been doing that on the phone. What we need to do now is educate people, to give them something, to provide substance.”³⁰⁷ Such distinctions reflect the competing yet overlapping legacies at stake. Abandoning the quest for a singular origin to the Chicago survivor movement – a quest that is, as many theorists have pointed out in recent years, an inherently ideological one – allows us to appreciate in less subjective terms the messiness of these early grassroots survivor organizations. Blaine helped Miller reach a larger audience while Miller funneled local survivors into Blaine’s self-help group at St. Elizabeth’s. Blaine and Miller sometimes supported one another, even as they understood themselves to be doing separate, at times competing, work.

Even in SNAP’s nascent stages, Blaine recognized the power of the media to reach out to other survivors and to raise awareness of Church abuses. In 1988, Blaine placed an advertisement in the National Catholic Reporter, in which she asked other survivors to come forward and billed “The Victims Network” (as it was then called) as a “political action to challenge the Church to better deal with the problem of priests’ sexual

³⁰⁷ Interview with the author, August 19, 2014.
misconduct.” When Miller and Thomas Doyle appeared on talk shows, they gave out Jeanne’s hotline for survivors. When Jason Berry appeared on talk shows, he referred viewers to contact Blaine. After Berry’s endorsement on the Phil Donahue show in 1988, the telephone at St. Elizabeth’s started ringing “off the hook.” Blaine recorded the victims’ names and numbers, and began to put callers in touch with one another, as Miller’s LINKUP hotline also did. But by the end of the 1980s, SNAP existed mostly as a rotating group of 12 to 20 survivors who gathered together in the living room at St. Elizabeth’s to share their suffering with one another. A decade later, when Blaine began in earnest to transform SNAP into a national organization, she described it as the inheritor to Day’s Catholic Worker. In a 1999 speech, Blaine articulated the survivor movement as the logical continuum of Catholic social action. “In the 1980s,” she said, the preferential option was for the poor. I suggest now we need a preferential option for victims of abuse, because today they are the most marginalized in our church and society.”

**Polcyn’s Blessing, Blaine’s Freedom**

Blaine struggled to keep St. Elizabeth’s running while also ministering to fellow abuse victims. A few years after Oliviero’s passing, she had met another Catholic Worker, Dr. Peter Mayock, and again fell in love. They made a terrific team, but they needed to find new sources of funding in order to keep St. Elizabeth’s running. Through telephone calls and introductory visits, they made appeals for assistance to the city’s networks of

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308 Berry and Renner, *Vows of Silence*, 78.
309 Interview with the author, October 20, 2012.
Catholic activists and wealthy patrons. Through the 8th Day Center for Justice, Blaine was directed to Evanston’s Nancy Cusack who, in turn, introduced Barbara and Peter to Nina Polcyn Moore.311

Polcyn and her husband Thomas Eugene (“Gene”) Moore had returned to Chicago in 1985. They purchased a modest apartment in Evanston. Nina and Gene became very active in St. Mary’s parish and, later, Northwestern’s Sheil Center. Nina was particularly devoted to peace and anti-nuclear protests during the 1980s, and local organizers were thankful to have such an accomplished woman join their ranks. In 1988, Gene was diagnosed with leukemia. The news stunned Nina, and she felt overwhelmed by the thought of caring for him alone. As Nina recounted to her friends at Sheil over the following years, she knelt all day after that doctor’s appointment and prayed to her recently-departed friend, Dorothy Day, for assistance. “The next day,” as Nina would tell the story, “Dorothy sent me two angels: Barbara and Dr. Peter.”312

Blaine and Polcyn’s first visit together proved providential for both women. Polcyn needed someone to take care of Gene; Blaine and Mayock filled the role perfectly. Dr. Mayock made Gene more comfortable, and Blaine was used to sponge baths, vomit, and adult diapers. Together, Blaine and Mayock provided hospice ministry to Gene, and they were by his side when he died later that year. In return, Blaine and Mayock were treated to a deep friendship. Gene’s suffering and death brought the three of them together; Polcyn

311 Fieldnotes, March 5, 2015.
312 Fieldnotes, March 5, 2015.
even started to refer affectionately to Barbara and Peter as her “kids.” Cognizant of her own age, Polcyn yearned for one last trip to see her favorite European cities. Insisting that she needed Blaine to be her “museum companion,” and Dr. Mayock to accompany as her personal physician, the three of them travelled to Italy and France together, spending most of their time in Paris and Florence.

Before his marriage to Nina, Gene had enjoyed success in the banking industry. His passing left Nina financially secure; she said her goal was “to give it all away” before she died. From Gene’s passing to her own in 2006, Polcyn spent most of that inheritance supporting Barbara’s mission. Polcyn’s financial backing made it possible for Blaine to leave St. Elizabeth’s and move back to the near north side, which she did in 1993. Also through Polcyn’s financial generosity, Blaine enrolled in the DePaul University School of Law, where she earned a J.D. in 1995.

To the extent that Blaine worked on survivor issues during these years, it was primarily in traveling to Boston during multiple trips from 1990 to 1992, in the wake of the ripples generated by survivor Frank Fitzpatrick’s boldly publicized allegations against his childhood abuser, Fr. James Porter of Fall River, Massachusetts. As the Porter scandal unfolded in the *The Boston Globe*, Blaine, Mayock, and fellow worker Helen O’Neil commuted back and forth between St. Elizabeth’s and Haley House (f. 1966), a Catholic Worker home for men located in the heart of Boston’s South End. At Haley House, Blaine

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313 Fieldnotes, March 5, 2015. This was in addition to Gene’s five biological children, who Polcyn continued to mother after his passing. Today, Blaine and Gene’s eldest daughter, Kathleen, remain very close friends.
314 Fieldnotes, March 5, 2015.
315 Fieldnotes, March 5, 2015.
founded a second victims’ monthly meeting group, which later called itself the Boston chapter of SNAP. The Boston group did not attract much national attention in 1991 and 1992, but it reaped enormous dividends a decade later, when Boston 2002 erupted and LINKUP began to collapse.

**Miller’s “Spies”: the BVM Espionage that Fueled LINKUP**

During this same period, from 1988 to 1991, Miller traveled the talk show circuit as Hilary Stiles and promoted the LINKUP hotline. Without Miller’s knowledge, the Archdiocese had reassigned Fr. Mayer to his ninth parish in thirty years, this time to St. Odilo’s, which was a social world apart from his former parishes, located geographically in the inner-belt, immigrant suburb of Berwyn. In October of 1991, Miller received a telephone call from a friend in the priesthood, who confided that over the summer, Mayer had been caught on the roof of his rectory garage with an eighteen year old and a fourteen year old, all naked.³¹⁶ “And that – that’s when I blew it,” Miller says.³¹⁷ She spent the entire night putting together a statement for the press. The following morning, Miller recalls, “I called up Joe and said ‘Watch the news tonight,’ and I called Mary Ann Ahern at Channel 5 and said, ‘Bring out the cameras!’”³¹⁸ At the press conference, Miller announced the creation of VOCAL, and she gave out her home phone number on camera, hoping that the parents of the St. Odilo victims would call her. Although none of the victims’ families responded to her appeal, plenty of parishioners from the area watched the

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³¹⁶ Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
³¹⁷ Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
³¹⁸ Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
news. In an effort to calm the outrage of concerned parishioners, the diocese agreed to a closed-door meeting with parents at the St. Odilo parish hall. Miller wanted desperately to be at the meeting. Remembering that the sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary ran the parish school, Miller called the parish’s adjacent convent, identified herself as a former-BVM, and asked the nuns for the details of the meeting.

Miller entered the hall incognito, keeping to herself while the room anxiously waited for Bishop Goedert to take the podium. Goedert began by assuring the parents that Mayer had been “under supervision” while at the parish, and that as a condition of his appointment to St. Odilo’s, the archdiocese had strictly forbidden Mayer from being alone with any minors. This announcement only angered the roomful of parishioners. Before his abrupt departure, Mayer had been meeting regularly with the 13- and 14-year olds in the parish to prepare them for the sacrament of Confirmation. “Who was supervising him?” several parents demanded. “Why did you let him come here?” another shouted. According to Miller, Goedert responded that the lawsuit at St. Edna’s had been unwarranted. “It was just a silly incident there, he told the assembled parents. “The lawsuit was filed by a mom who – Fr. Mayer took her son on this boating trip out of the goodness of his heart – paid for it himself, entertained the boys, and one of the boys swallowed a little water while he was swimming, and she freaked out. That’s all.” Before the parent could ask a follow-up question, Miller stood up, “Hello, Bishop Goedert. Apparently you don’t recognize me, but I am that ‘mom’ you just spoke of. Now would you like to tell the room what really
happened at St. Edna’s?” In Miller’s words, “he confessed on the spot,” explaining to the parents that he simply had not wanted to add to the worries and anxieties they were already feeling for their children.

Over the following ten months, Miller spoke frequently with Cardinal Bernardin. Although she was warned by several of his staff members that, “the Cardinal does not like organizations,” Bernardin did not make any outward attempt to thwart Miller’s fledgling nonprofit. In June 1992, Miller asked the Cardinal to be the keynote speaker at an event she had been planning all year, the first national meeting of clergy abuse survivors, which was to be held in Chicago that October. After two months of mulling over the idea, Bernardin accepted her invitation. Less than a week before the conference, Miller was quoted in the *Chicago Tribune* as criticizing the most recent set of recommendations issued by the Cardinal’s diocesan committee on clergy abuse. Although Miller regarded it as an impersonal technicality, Bernardin perceived it as a stab in the back. He sent a letter via courier service to Miller’s law offices, informing Jeanne that he could no longer in “good conscience” attend the event. In spite of his absence, the first LINKUP conference was a landmark gathering. The conference, titled “Breaking the Silence,” created the mold for the way survivors understood their suffering and the actions they took towards self-healing.

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319 Interview with the author, 20 August 2014.
CHAPTER 4

Finding a Voice: The Need to be Vocal and the Desire to Be Heard, 1991-2002

The Chicago survivor movement has passed through two distinct phases. During its formative years, 1982 to 2002, the movement comprised just two organizations, VOCAL and SNAP, which focused – albeit with distinctive approaches – on the goals of healing and restorative justice. The Church hierarchy presumed Jeanne Miller’s and Barbara Blaine’s experiences to be anomalous, similar to the handful of clergy abuse cases that made national headlines during this period, most notably the 1985 trial of Gilbert Gauthe in Louisiana, and the determined resolve of James Porter’s victims in the early 1990s. Gauthe had confessed to raping thirty children. After Gauthe was indicted, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) privately assessed their potential liability for other abusive priests. NCCB commissioned a study spearheaded by Gauthe’s defense lawyer, Roy Mouton, and Rev. Tom Doyle, O.P., a canon law expert who worked at the Vatican embassy in Washington D.C. The confidential, 92-page document estimated the potential cost of abuse lawsuits to be as high as $1 billion. The NCCB did not act to investigate accused priests, nor did they publicly disclose Doyle and Mouton’s research.

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So when Jeanne Miller (as Hillary Styles) told her story on the Oprah Winfrey Show in 1989, laypersons across the country were shocked.

By 1992, the landscape had shifted. American victims had filed approximately 400 lawsuits alleging priestly sexual abuse, and in May of that year Frank Fitzpatrick had a breakthrough in his lifelong effort to locate other victims of Fr. James Porter. Within a few months of Fitzpatrick’s story being aired on a Boston CBS affiliate, more than 130 Porter survivors came forward, from three states, with additional allegations against the former priest. To understand what had changed in the popular Catholic psyche – between Berry’s coverage of Gauthe in 1985 and Fitzpatrick’s public denouncement of Porter in 1992 – it is necessary to understand the work of the three laywomen in Chicago who laid the foundation for survivors nationwide.

Indeed, while these cases eventually provided a national forum for VOCAL and SNAP, the distinctive personae of the Chicago survivor movement were developed within the city’s preconciliar lay apostolate, a broad tradition of progressive, grassroots, female-led lay organizations, which had derived from the earlier Catholic Action movement. Likewise, the emotions of betrayal and re-victimization that ultimately spurred Jeanne Miller and Barbara Blaine to create formal survivor organizations is intelligible only in light of the disconnect between, on the one hand, the way Joseph Cardinal Bernardin dealt with these victims and, on the other, Bernardin’s national reputation as the paradigm of

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compassionate ethics and, more specifically, forward-thinking policies and procedures for dealing with clergy sexual abuse allegations.

The second phase, 2002 to 2012, was heralded by the death of VOCAL’s leader and the repositioning of the national media spotlight onto the more successfully publicized clergy abuse “scandal” in Boston. Over the first decade of the new millennia, VOCAL slowly dissolved, giving way to SNAP and several smaller Chicago survivor groups. By 2012, SNAP had redoubled its efforts nationally and internationally, including its successful attempt to bring suit against the Vatican under two committees of the United Nations’ International Criminal Court. As the U.N. suit suggests, the primary focus of the survivor movement had shifted towards seeking legal penalties against the church and maintaining sustained media attention. Yet, even as the rhetoric of SNAP and smaller organizations focused more on legal accountability, Chicago survivors saw lawsuits as a pathway to the spiritual, moral, and personal healing that they sought, as we will see. Even if legal action eventually became an expression of bitter resentment and of a desire to punish the Church, such sentiments were not originally the primary motivation for survivors.

This chapter is a history of the spiritual and religious influences that characterized the first phase of the Chicago survivor movement. I begin with the Catholic formations of the women who co-founded VOCAL. The communities that Blaine, Miller, and Steffel founded combined the discipline and moral clarity of Joseph Cardijn’s tripartite approach (observe, judge, act) with the post-Conciliar assertion that the church is the “People of God.” All of these women came from middle-class, Catholic, Irish American families.
Eventually leading successful careers and even obtaining post-secondary degrees in theology and law, they came to embody what has been called “the soaring self-confidence” of “Chicago-style” Catholicism.\(^{323}\) The character that defined the Chicago survivor movement thus owed less to these leaders’ shared experience of sexual victimization than to their earlier training within other Chicago lay organizations.

The second half of this chapter is a historically-informed anthropology of “voice” within the first phase of the survivor movement. From 1982 to 2002, Chicago survivors sought individual healing and ecclesiological reform *through* these forms of speech. As a community, they aimed to have their pain vocalized and heard. Survivors understood victimhood as leading to spiritual purity and insight. Similar to liberationist maintain that the marginalized have a privileged and prophetic view of authority, survivors claim that their experience gives them special insight and ability to articulate clerical misdeeds. Understanding the meaning of “voice” in phase one of the movement allows us to excavate the religious expectations that undergirded the movement’s eventual turn towards judicial and legislative intervention (which is the focus of Chapter 3). “Voice” had multiple meanings within the first decade of the survivor movement, including the paramount roles of Miller and her successor, Rev. Tom Economus.\(^{324}\) These charismatic co-founders advised survivors to voice their abuse, a ritual that they understood simultaneously as an

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\(^{323}\) Ellen Skerrett et. al., *Catholicism, Chicago Style* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1993), xvii.  
\(^{324}\) In future chapters, I delineate other, subsequent resonances of “voice” in the post-2002 amalgamations of survivor/reform groups. For example, “voice” remains a highly affective term within Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful (C-VOTF), but for most of that community voice is shorthand for the ability to have more power as laypersons over diocesan administration and finances. It means having a voice at the table, a voice – VOTF claims – that would have made all the difference in the way bishops handled reports of abusive priests.
act of individual healing and communal justice. The early survivor movement was characterized by the tension between lobbying for hierarchical “accountability” and trying to discover “the journey to healing.” Although leaders tried to reinvigorate the healing component of VOCAL’s mission, American culture interpreted the abuse crisis primarily as a criminal and institutional problem. In spite of the publicity survivor lawsuits have received, VOCAL members imagined the courts as a last resort. They understood their abuse primarily as a religious act of betrayal. As such, the first impulse of many survivors was to turn back to the Roman Catholic Church for spiritual guidance and medical counseling.

The First Conference

On October 16, 1992, VOCAL co-founders Jeanne Miller and Marilyn Steffel stood together at the front of the Woodfield grand ballroom, behind a podium surrounded by microphones, staring into an array of television news cameras and a live audience of nearly 300 survivors. Steffel introduced herself, with typical humility, as the former director of parish life at Miller’s congregation, a position from which she was fired because she helped Miller blow the whistle on an abusive pastor. After a standing ovation, Miller began by complicating the unspoken hierarchy of victimhood within the room. Miller’s son had been sexually touched by Mayer, but not repeatedly abused or raped, as had many of the victims in attendance that day. Miller elided such tensions by identifying that, in priests’ sexual violence against children, they had abused the spirits and souls of a
much broader population. “The real thread here,” Miller said, “is that this was an abuse of power, an exploitation of the family, a betrayal of spiritual trust.”\textsuperscript{325} Most of the audience members knew the core details of Miller’s background, so she told a condensed version that stressed the havoc wreaked on relationships. After accusing Fr. Mayer, the Millers lost all of their friends. Steffel was the only parish employee who openly supported them. The family went bankrupt. Miller and her husband got divorced.

As her eloquent, almost seamless blending of personal sacrifice and Vatican II theology suggests, the survivor movement’s agenda was, from the start, intimately dependent upon the broader goals of spiritual renewal and ecumenical reform.

When we found out about our son’s abuse, we turned to the church because our expectation was that the church cared about him – that they cared about us. Church was an absolutely integral part of our lives. We were terrified. We ultimately realized that the church cannot take away what is ours. That it is ours. And that’s one of the messages that I hope you all go away with this weekend. That you realize that as a group we must stick together. Go home and say – it belongs to us. They do not tell us what to do. The church is not about hierarchy, the church is about me. This is a religious moment. This weekend is a pastoral privilege. Because church is people. And that’s who we are... There is a lot of angry energy generated by the betrayal of spiritual truth. But we can recover. We are here to speak out, to reclaim our voices, to take back what was stolen from us.\textsuperscript{326}

Drawing on her years of experience as the public face of clergy victimhood, Miller’s opening remarks were organized around a set of emotional tropes that would become familiar in survivors’ stories and establish a narrative arc from betrayal to fear to restorative justice. Here, the “Church” functions as a malleable term. When urging her


\textsuperscript{326} Miller, “Breaking the Silence” recording, \textit{my emphasis}. 
audience toward action, Miller eschewed any equivalence between the hierarchy and the “Church,” instead adopting the conception of the “Church” as the “People of God.” This rhetorical move was empowering and future-oriented, calling on survivors to act together in order to “take back” the power that the hierarchy has usurped. For Miller and the movement’s other leaders, when survivors and other laypersons join together as the People of God, only moral good and justice can result. Here, the “People of God” recalls the notion of the “Mystical Body of Christ” in which the suffering and the compassionate share in the suffering and redemption of Christ. But when Miller and other members of the survivor movement looked back to the horrors of abuse they blame “the Church,” a term that designated the hierarchy as the only culpable parties who needed to be held accountable. In this sense, “the Church” was not the People of God. Instead, it rejuvenated a powerful hierarchy, whose moral accountability for the exploitation of survivors both during their abuse and after it, could only be sought through legal accountability.

This terminological framing became crucial to survivors’ conceptions of past abuses and of who within the Church was ultimately responsible for their suffering. When looking back to the abuse, survivors eschew the connection between “the Church” and “the people.” The shift also facilitated a public discourse in which survivors often came across as less circumspect than they actually were. In media coverage of the Chicago abuse crisis, as well as in the ways that groups like Call to Action and later Voice of the Faithful celebrated survivor theology, it may have seemed as though survivors did not place any blame at the feet of other laypersons, including their family and loved ones, whether by ignoring abuse, failing to report it, or neglecting to involve the criminal justice system.
Perhaps unwittingly, this discursive framework publically situated the blame solely at the feet of powerful bishops and abusing priests, effectively silencing survivors’ equally painful emotions about the responsibility of their fellow laypersons.

A dozen nationally-renowned experts joined Miller as the conference’s headlining acts, including Fr. Tom Doyle, O.P., a Vatican-embassy whistleblower; Jeffery Anderson, a Minnesota trial lawyer much loved by some survivors; A.W. Richard Sipe, a former priest and clinical psychologist for the Church’s largest pedophile treatment center; the late Fr. Andrew M. Greeley, S.T.L., a celebrated author, Sun-Times columnist, and University of Chicago sociologist; and Jason Berry, a New-Orleans based reporter who had brought to national public attention the case of systemic abuser Gilbert Gauthe. Some of the 300 survivors at the conference had never spoken to anyone about their abuse. When people started calling her hotline, Miller explained, she heard a chorus of lost sheep. “As I listened to your pain, I realized I was not alone. But we were all suffering in silence.” Even co-founder Marilyn Steffel described herself as vulnerable, shameful, weak at the first conference: “When the press entered the conference room most of us victims stayed at the back of the room. We were afraid to be seen for fear of reprisal from the Church, our community, and even our families.”

In the first decade, VOCAL understood its mission as creating this prophetic voice. Most survivors found the very thought of speaking about their abuse immensely intimidating. In her closing remarks, Miller described this silent suffering as the

centerpiece of clergy abuse victimhood, and she called on her flock to unite in confessing their torment aloud:

From the start of our religious education, we were conditioned to understand that the highest virtue is sacrifice. That we are to suffer and smile, forgive and forget. [pause] But I say that the highest moral virtue is healthy outrage. This outrage is not irreverent – it’s religion itself, it’s making sense of our lives… This event is one of the most important in the history of the reformation of the church. We turned to them as children. We turned to them in vulnerability, and if this weekend does nothing else, it allows us to release that child’s voice. That voice within us that has been screaming. And turn it into a prophetic adult voice that moves the church forward.328

Many survivors had spent years, some of them decades, under the self-imposed assumption that their abuse was an anomalous, dark secret that they would carry to the grave. Miller conceived of VOCAL as a direct response to that communal silence, which included the silence of clergy and would-be whistleblowers. By voicing their stories publically, survivors would finally recognize that they were not alone. They could “link up” with one another, victims with victims, and victims with attorneys, to demand legal “accountability” and institutional reform from the Church. Through all of these efforts, VOCAL created an enduring model and identity of survivorhood of clergy abuse, providing the narrative elements, platforms, and meanings to voice. To be a survivor was to tell one’s story, first to other survivors, and then to the public, to name one’s accuser, and to demand moral and legal accountability.

The resonance of prominent themes from liberation theology in Miller and Steffel’s conception of “prophetic voice” suggest that it would be worthwhile to consider the extent

to which these women’s involvement in groups like the 8th Day Center for peace and justice had introduced the ideas of Gustavo Gutierrez and other liberation theologians into the collective psyche of survivor leaders.

**Miller’s Departure**

Less than a year after the first conference, Miller announced that she was permanently retiring from the survivor movement, explaining that, after almost ten years of battling on behalf of her son, she “needed a break.” In fact, Miller had already enrolled at Loyola University School of Law. For the next decade, Miller’s “hand-picked,” successor, Tom Economus, ran the VOCAL as “Executive Director,” the first and only salaried position in the organization. Archdiocesan officials were frustrated by Economus's appointment, describing him as “hot-tempered and mercurial.” Partly because of Miller’s ambition to become a lawyer, she and Economus soon had “a falling out” which “estranged them so completely that Miller broke off contact with the organization.” Yet Economus never wavered in crediting Miller for her prophetic voice. In a long interview he gave to the *Chicago Reader* in 1999, Economus spoke of Miller as mother, “She gave birth to the national Survivor Movement. For many of us, Jeanne was the only voice we had, the only person listing to our pain.”

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329 After just six months, Dennis Gaboury resigned from the volunteer position of VOCAL President. Within the day, the VOCAL Board of Advisors unanimously chose Economus to serve as both President and Executive Director. He held both positions from 1993 until his death in 2002.
Indeed, Chicago’s early survivors adored voice like a charism. They described the VOCAL conferences as a sanctuary where they learned how to live the gospel by enunciating their secret shame:

The connection with other survivors… was, for many of us, even more healing than the formal sessions. Instant bonding and the chorus of truth-tellers speaking ‘survivorese’ created an immediate community… Thanks to Jeanne Miller’s persistent spirit, there are now many of us in the choir. We will continue declaring the principles of justice and peace, ecumenically and internationally, until our voices are heard to the ends of the earth. Never has the true gospel been more alive!³³³

Many survivors came to admire Economus for the gift he had heard in Miller, marveling at his power to give others voice. Fr. Gary Hayes, the only Roman Catholic priest on the VOCAL board, proclaimed, “Tom’s legacy is the thousands of survivors who would not have been able to speak without his support.”³³⁴ Even Marilyn Steffel, who had helped Miller found the organization, credited Economus as her source of strength, “The VOCAL, especially in the voice of Tom Economus, supported these victims. He helped us find the courage to speak about our abuse… It was named. It was spoken. There was no going back.”³³⁵

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The Power to Speak

Economus’s biography echoed that of Miller’s, solidifying public speech as the paradigm through which other survivors imagined their divine purpose. He grew up in Highland Park, Illinois, in a family of three children. When his parents hit a bump in their marriage, they sent Tom and his brother David, both altar boys, to Sky Ranch for Boys, a boarding school in Rapid City, South Dakota. The ranch was run by a family acquaintance, Father Don Murray, who opened the facility with the blessing of his local bishop. Murray’s Sky Ranch business card featured a silhouette of a priest and a boy, to the left of the motto, “A man never stands so straight as when he helps a boy.”

According to a Catholic Digest profile of Murray, he rehabilitated boys aged 11 to 18 by teaching them to fly. Murray would take them alone in his Cessna, climb above a certain altitude, and instruct the problem child to "Take the stick." This was the first step, to get the boy to "obey instructions from a superior." The second step was to force the child to unknowingly throw the aircraft into a violent, downward spin. Murray explained, "All of a sudden the tough, unbending kid needs help, and realizes it. The emotion he is feeling is not one he has experienced before. Then come the words I have been waiting to hear. 'Help me, Father.'"

Just one month after the Catholic Digest profile was published, Fr. Murray crashed his airplane into the ground. Three children were aboard. One died, along with Murray, as a direct result of the crash. A second boy committed suicide shortly after the

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338 Henry and Vera Bradshaw, “Father Murray...,” 31.
incident. The third boy was Tom's younger brother, David. The Sky Ranch Foundation told parents that Fr. Murray suffered a heart attack midair. Twenty years later, when the Economus brothers requested documentation, they learned that the FAA attributed the crash to Murray's blood alcohol content, which the coroner’s autopsy recorded as 0.284. In their public statement, the brothers also drew attention to the fact that Sky Ranch was “sponsored by the National Liquor Industry.” Indeed, as of 2015, the sole financial supporters of Sky Ranch are all associated with the beer and liquor industries. The Sky Ranch Foundation lists these donors as “The American Beverage Licensees, The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibly, The Tavern League of Wisconsin, and The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America.”

During his 20s, Economus struggled with alcoholism and drug use. The stereotype of the alcoholic survivor became a hegemonic trope in media and journalistic portrayals of the Catholic abuse crisis. Those were “my crazy years,” Economus said, adding “I know the source of alcoholism and drug abuse is directly related to the abuse, particularly the fact that… the first drink of alcohol I ever had was with this priest. Because Father said it was OK.” In the press conference publicizing their lawsuit against Sky Ranch, Tom and David listed alcoholism as the first injury caused by Fr. Murray’s abuse: “Both David

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and I have battled years of alcohol abuse; unavoidable psychological damage, depression, and sexual confusion, as a result of our experiences at Sky Ranch.” Alcoholism was common within the early survivor community. VOCAL’s annual conference schedule even reserved private conference rooms for “AA, GA, NA, OA meetings for women and men (separate and together).” For survivors who battled addictions, this causal connection between their sexual abuse and subsequent chemical addiction was critical for establishing the church’s liability. (A clinical diagnosis of alcoholism is considered valid evidence in most state courtrooms, allowing victims to seek damages even if the abuse itself was outside of the applicable statutes of limitation.)

When Economus spoke with other survivors, his emphasis shifted from dependency to emptiness. To VOCAL members, he emphasized that his spirituality was actually the first victim of his abuse, describing the loss of his relationship with God as “hitting rock bottom:”

> It took me a long time to actually admit that I hated God. But I did. And it’s a raw emotion. I felt very guilt about it, very saddened. I mean, how do you hate God? And yet I did. Where was God? Where was he when these two priests were molesting me?... I couldn't understand how an agent of God, a person handpicked by God, could do these horrible things to me. And to my brother. And God sanctioned it? So it was out of that rage, that pain, that I hated God and felt very guilty about my own abuse.  

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344 These are four of the most common variants of the Twelve-Step Fellowship Meetings: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Gamblers Anonymous (GA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), and Overeaters Anonymous (OA). “Registration Form for the Third National VOCAL Conference,” Missing Link 3, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 15.

345 Frontline, “Interview with Tom Economus.”
Like Miller, Economus had never supported one of Chicago’s numerous reform groups, such as Call to Action, and although his abuse left him confused about his sexual orientation, he showed no interest in joining the area’s vibrant Dignity chapter.

After a near-death bar fight, Economus decided to travel back to South Dakota in order to confront the bishop of Rapid City, who also chaired the Sky Ranch Foundation. “By going to the Church, I reacted in the manner I was taught: if you have a problem and you have exhausted all avenues and possibilities, turn to church, turn to God, He will help you through them.” The bishop, perhaps presuming an economic motive, informed Economus, “We’re no longer affiliated with Sky Ranch and we have not been for three years. There’s no liability.” To which Economus claimed to have replied, “I’m not seeking liability. I’m seeking an apology, an acknowledgement. I’m here because I think there are other victims.” The bishop offered to pay for counseling, and the Archdiocese of Chicago referred Economus to one of their clinically-licensed priests. He was pleased with the diocesan sessions, until his therapist sexually assaulted him. Twice betrayed, Economus felt stricken with guilt, bewildered by a God who had scorned his prayers by sending another abusive priest.

Although Economus “knew I should leave the Church,” he still felt a calling towards ministry. So instead he enrolled at a Roman Catholic seminary, where he was tormented by the sex lives of fellow seminarians. “I remember the first day we went to

347 Frontline, “Interview with Tom Economus.”
348 Frontline, “Interview with Tom Economus.”
classes,” Economus said, “I felt like I was at a meat market… People were checking you out, scanning me over. I saw too many things, too many inconsistencies. A lot of students were heterosexually or homosexually active. The whole thing was dysfunctional.”

He dropped out of seminary and returned to drug use, until he saw Miller on Oprah, called her hotline, and joined the fledgling VOCAL. Miller upheld “Tom” as a poster child, a living testimony of re-victimization. In her 1993 statement naming Economus as her successor, Miller said, “Because Tom has repeatedly endured the pain of betrayal and exploitation… his commitment to a life of ministry is valid and filled with compassion.”

Economus’s many and sometimes contradictory roles have enduring potency for both survivors and the media. Like, Miller he was re-victimized many times, by sexual abuse, alcoholism, and the denial of these experiences by his family and Church. For survivors, this victimization lent him particular credibility and virtue. It provided him a pathway to assess the moral failings of the hierarchy and to hold the clergy accountable of their crimes. With his seminary background, he also carried the aura of authority of the priesthood among many survivors. In Economus’s telling, however, seminaries were beyond repair, such that he needed to remove himself from such a depraved atmosphere in order to attain the spirituality that he so desperately sought. Economus crafted a self-image in which he both donned the collar and celebrated the “People’s Church.” He harnessed the power of the priesthood in his media appearances, even though he was not technically a Roman Catholic priest. Like A.W. Richard Sipe and Thomas Doyle, the survivor saints I

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349 Frontline, “Interview with Tom Economus.”
will discuss in Chapter 6, he appealed to survivors’ desire for intimacy with priests, even as they expressed staunch critiques of clerical authority.

**Speaking the Journey from Victimization to Survivorhood**

Miller’s and Economus’s shared experiences forged a narrative from which other survivors began to feel like part of a religious movement. By 2001, Economus had transformed the trope of re-victimization into an all-out battle cry, asserting that spiritual destitution had forced them away from pastoral care. It was only after the Church closed its doors that survivors asked legislators and jurists for help. This sense of being “re-victimized” became an essential component of their collective identity. Survivors had been *forced* to sue their parents’ parishes. This narrative simultaneously blamed and credited the Roman Catholic Church for setting the conditions for the emergence of the survivor movement. The core of this narrative was already in place by 1995:

> We are the children of betrayal. The victims and survivors abandoned by family, church, and society because we spoke out about the molestation we endured at the hands of priests, nuns, and bishops… In the early days of VOCAL, we were vulnerable, fragmented people, who had looked to their church for help and been turned away… If the Church had *listened* to our pain, lawsuits would not have been filed.\(^{351}\)

Economus held the Church doubly responsible: for perpetuating and covering-up the abuse and for its legal troubles that followed. If it had only acknowledged its moral accountability, then the legal reckoning could have been avoided altogether. For Miller,

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\(^{351}\) Economus, “Growing Pains.” (*emphasis original*)
legal accountability was the only option because the Church failed to acknowledge its moral culpability.

Economus detailed the multiple rituals that transformed broken, isolated victims into united, judicially-empowered survivors.

In 1991, VOCAL established in an effort to bring the bishops to accountability… victims were vulnerable, fragmented individuals who looked to their Church for guidance, healing, spirituality and compassion. The same Church that had taught us as children to love our neighbor as responsible, moral, God-fearing individuals. Unfortunately, the Church turned us away. The large, grand doors once opened and welcoming were now slammed in our faces… As a result of the Church’s inaction, hypocrisy, re-victimization, denial, cover-up and moral bankruptcy, vulnerable and fragmented victims morphed into angry, outraged warriors. Along our journey, the media befriended us and provided a once silent group of individuals with a forum to speak from. It was this collaboration between survivors and the media that eventually broke the silence… We united and organized in an all-out effort to remove abusive clergy from positions of power, force hierarchical accountability, and establish policies and procedures to protect other children and remunerated us for our pain… Survivors confronted church leaders, calling the bishops into accountability. We created databases on abusive clergy. We staged demonstrations, locally and nationally, and led protests to the doors of bishops’ homes… We filed an avalanche of lawsuits, and demanded that the onus and our suffering be put at the feet of those responsible for our pain… We are victims, survivors, thrivers, loved ones, spouses, significant others, children, and concerned folks who struggle every day with our abuse, but refuse to cave in.352

This dynamic cosmology corresponds to the frenzied priorities of VOCAL during the 1990s. In order to understand the rituals that comprised the claim by VOCAL leaders that they had been transformed from victim to survivor, it is helpful to analyze these priorities in relation to the local community’s broader goals. Chicago survivors spoke (or shouted) to almost anyone who would listen. They told dentists and hairdressers about their abuse,

hung out at bus stops and left stacks of pamphlets in the back seats of taxi cabs. And of course they protested at cathedrals; wrote op-eds; booked talk show appearances; and assembled a who’s-who Rolodex of national jurists and plaintiffs’ attorneys. Each of these audiences entailed a discrete space, as well as a distinct set of shared idioms through which survivors described their pain and suffering to strangers. The key is that, after being denied and intimidated by their Church, survivors came to imagine these other publics as microphones through which they might reach Roman Catholic leaders. Even survivors who were pessimistic about the likelihood of ecclesiastical reform believed that spiritual healing and psychological comfort would be attainable through these public forums. Undergirding this hope for healing was a shared cultural presumption that speaking was itself therapeutic and, moreover that social, religious, and juridical reforms would necessarily result from having their suffering heard.

**Using the Media as a National Pulpit**

At the first healing conference in 1993, Miller described her rise to celebrity as a byproduct of her effort to heal through prose: “I thought I was alone. So in 1987, I wrote *Assault on Innocence*... as a sort of therapy. I went on TV and radio talk shows to tell my story.” Miller interpreted her healing as the natural outcome of her decision to speak out publically. In the first volume of *Missing Link*, she tried to persuade her readers to share their pain with the media as well:

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353 Pulpit is a protestant term. Although not common in English usage, the Roman Catholic equivalent is called an *ambon*.

354 Miller, Tape 1, “Breaking the Silence.”
The Sacred Silence needs to stop. Many Victims/Survivors come to a point where they recognize the therapeutic value of airing their stories publicly – usually after much frustration over futile attempts at resolution through the church institution. All are concerned that their perpetrators never have an opportunity to hurt another and come to recognize that ‘going public’ is the most effective, if not the ONLY way, to accomplish this. Please let us know in writing whether or not you are willing to go public, and we will put the press in contact with you.\(^{355}\)

The healing conferences included workshops on “how to tell your story.” Survivors applauded the media for listening. Economus was particularly enraged by the publication of Philip Jenkins’s *Pedophile Priests*, which he understandably interpreted as an indictment against media coverage of clergy abuse victims, insisting that, “the church turned a deaf ear while the media listened.”\(^{356}\)

At times, Economus seemed wary of the spotlight. In 1996, he added a panel on “dealing with the media” to the national conference, describing media attention as “a feeding frenzy. A double-edged sword. Victims and survivors were hunted and haunted by reporters and TV produces. We needed the media to tell our stories. They needed us to boost ratings.”\(^{357}\)

Other VOCAL survivors, particularly Rev. Jay Nelson, continued to view journalists as close allies. Nelson edited *The Missing Link*, the quarterly newsletter VOCAL published from 1991 to 2005. Miller’s telephone chain had cultivated real friendships and alliances among survivors of the same abuser. Occasionally, old classmates or even cousins would be put in touch through the hotline, only to realize for the first time that they were all victims. But survivors found one another only if they reached out to

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Miller. Self-conscious of the hotline’s limitations, Miller launched *The Missing Link* to provide a national (soon-international) community of survivors with a comprehensive overview of clergy abuse news. Her hope was that survivors who had moved throughout the country would recognize a parish or priest from the news stories, then contact the VOCAL with more information, such as details on where an abusive priest had been assigned before and after the parish where he was known to have hurt children, whether there were victims in other states, and so on. This type of information was the “missing link,” Miller realized, that might empower more victims to come forward or take legal action.

The centerpiece of the *Missing Link* was a column descriptively titled “Survivor News,” which was comprised entirely of newspaper and magazine excerpts that Miller had painstakingly hand-clipped, photocopied, and arranged. The third installment of “Survivor News” occupied sixteen sides of 8.5” x 11” paper, each page laid out into four columns of continuous news reprints (no photographs). In a separate section of the *Missing Link*, Miller also republished survivor classifieds that other members had clipped and mailed in to her. The newsletter upheld these samples as witness to the power of reaching out to other might-be survivors.

After Miller’s departure, Nelson – who worked mostly from his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico – recognized the potential of newer technologies, and convinced Economus to launch both the “VOCAL Faxline” and a website to expedite the submission and publication speed of these news stories. The resultant column, renamed from “Survivor News” to “Black Collar Crime,” became Nelson’s mainstay. Roughly 50%
of each issue of *Missing Link* was filled by these news clippings. Economus and Nelson went back and forth on the question of survivor confidentiality. In 1995, they announced that the *Missing Link* would begin printing victims’ full names, when known, in order to build relationships within the survivor community:

> Until now, it has been our policy to avoid naming survivors or settlement amounts in Black Collar Crimes, to respect the privacy of those speaking out… But is this right? In most news clipping that cross this desk, the survivors are identified by name. They had the courage to stand up; for better or rose, they’re already ‘out.’ By not naming them here, in a journal that celebrates such bravery, it not only denies them the support of their fellow survivors but perpetuates the shame and secrecy of all.\(^{358}\)

Nelson also set aside one third of the back cover for “Survivor’s Confidentials,” a new space where any survivor could publish, *gratis*, a classified soliciting information related to their own abuse. Some victims listed truly confidential information, such as their contact information, or the name of their abuser. Others took measures to protect their anonymity by listing the VOCAL office as their mailing address, or by providing only bare-bones details, such as the town and decade in which their abuse occurred.

Following a long line of lived Catholicism that emphasizes martyrdom and immortalizes self-sacrifice as the paradigm of piety, Chicago’s survivors understood themselves as belonging to a universal community of suffering. Their presumption, in other words, that the abuse crisis was in fact a *global* crisis came less from the evidence they found in newspaper clippings than from the ecclesiology of global suffering which they had, likely unconsciously, maintained from their childhood faith. Nelson and

Economus wrote that their vision was for VOCAL to become “the international clearinghouse for information regarding the global clergy sexual abuse crisis.” In 1995, they added the column “International Black Collar Crime,” which offered an unprecedented portrait of global victimhood. The international column refuted the NCCB’s and Vatican’s persistent claims that the crisis was “an American problem,” while reifying a universalized image of victimhood. In the cover editorial of the Fall 1996 issue, “A Global Problem Pointing to the Vatican,” Nelson asked, “Have we forgotten that catholic means universal? It is clear that clergy sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church is a global crisis. The patterns of abuse are the same globally, the lack of accountability globally, the scandal and the cover-up is the same globally, and unfortunately for the victims and their families, the pain is the same globally.”

To expand the “VOCAL Database,” Economus reached out to prominent contacts, particularly attorneys who, he hoped, could work with one another to leak information about abuse cases that had been settled before going to trial. (Many dioceses attached a gag order to settlement offers, which legally restricted victims from sharing their stories). In 1996, Economus and Rick Springer, the Midwest regional coordinator, compiled the names of accused clergy into a single document, which they then had professionally printed onto a large nylon banner. Titled “The Wall of Shame,” Springer and Economus told reporters that there were 666 names on the banner, a symbolic, as well as sensationalist, gesture towards a very real evil they feared. The banner travelled nationally.

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with Economus and figured prominently in media coverage of VOCAL’s 1996 protest of the NCCB meeting in Washington, D.C. Most likely inspired by other memorials and projects that list names, such as the Vietnam Memorial and AIDS quilts, VOCAL’s banner differed in that it listed clerical abusers, rather than the victims. The banner represented many of VOCAL’s goals: preserving the anonymity of survivors, while acknowledging and giving voice to their experiences; encouraging other survivors to come forward; warning other Catholics about potentially abusive clergy; challenging bishops to address criminal and immoral behavior in their ranks.

For some survivors, it was morally vindicating and spiritually healing just to see the names in print. Many wept openly when they scanned the “Wall” and finally found the name they had been searching for, the name of their abuser. Even if their family and neighbors could not decipher each priest’s name in the tiny photograph, they knew it was there. The banner served as the podium backdrop for subsequent healing conferences. In 1998, VOCAL members brought their own news clippings to the “Wall”, expanding the banner to cover all four interior walls of the hotel ballroom. The “Wall” was even featured on the tabloid television show Extra, and for four months it was prominently displayed at a downtown exhibit on art that empowers women. By 2002, Springer and Economus had compiled a “database containing 3800 names of Catholic clergy who had been publicly accused or convicted of sexual abuse.”

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Survivors cultivated significant relationships with media contacts. Economus was a repeat guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Reader* ran frequent stories about the VOCAL, including a 5,000-word feature about Economus’s spirituality in the *Reader* provocatively characterizing Economus as “The Grand Inquisitor.” When PBS *Frontline* produced a special on John Paul II, Economus was their expert on Catholic theologies of gender and sexuality. But former VOCAL members remembered Economus best for his 1997 appearance on the Cable News Network talk show *Larry King Live*. The King broadcast was produced in response to the July 24 verdict in Dallas, in which a jury had recently awarded $120 million in damages to eleven victims of Fr. Rudy Kos. Over the course of my field interviews, six survivors, unprompted and in separate conversations, told me their own version of this King broadcast. The tone was invariably fond, each emphasizing how lopsided the segment was. “You know, he really stuck it to them,” a survivor winked. “Economus pummeled that monsignor,” another interviewee said. King booked his guests following the formula of the television news talk show *Crossfire* (then still a novelty on CNN), with Economus and Demarest paired against diocesan representatives Msgr. John Bell, who had earlier that week issued the Diocese of Dallas’ formal apology to victims and parishioners, and attorney Richard Johnson, who had served as co-counsel for the diocese on behalf of his employer, the insurance group Lloyd’s of London. According to my interviewees, egged on by King, Economus stole

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362 The damages were subsequently reduced through appellate rulings, leading to a final settlement of $31 million.
363 Johnson happened to be based in Chicago, so he and Economus were streamed via satellite from the NBC building, while Demarest and Bell were filmed live from Dallas.
the show, simultaneously overpowering Bell’s staunch defensiveness and eclipsing Demarest’s more guarded comments.

VOCAL members cherished one exchange from the broadcast above all others. King nudged Economus to confront a monsignor. Survivors point to the moment because they remember it as but one example of Economus’s gifted ability to stand up to authority. Towards the end of the taping, Economus stated, “We have documented that the pedophile problem in the Roman Catholic church involves 10% of the overall population of priests.” King repeated the claim in astonishment, “Documented at 10%? Really? My god. That’s an epidemic!” At which point Bell blurted, with no hint of sarcasm in his voice, “If you follow that logic then we’re all pedophiles.” Stunned, Economus’s face warped into a wry, childish grin, and he replied, “Ohhhh reeeaaally?” The interviewees both paused in silence, the monsignor perhaps mentally replaying his sentence, while King cackled audibly in the background. Each of the survivors who told me this story impersonated the monsignor’s remorseful facial expression. It made no difference that Economus had cited an unsubstantiated figure, which likely deserved to be contested. For VOCAL members, this was a rare moment of unbridled optimism, the icing on the Dallas trial, one of their clearest moments of moral vindication.

364 The John Jay Report estimates 4% of Roman Catholic clergy have been accused of sexual abuse.
365 The Larry King show was broadcast internationally, and this particular taping included live audience telephone questions from Florence, Italy and London, England.
“An Avalanche of Lawsuits”

Although some of the victims had also pressed criminal charges against Fr. Kos, the landmark award of $120 million was for their class-action suit against the *diocese*. The suit was remarkable in several respects. First, VOCAL had been working with Kos’s victims for four years. Secondly, their inside contact was the lead attorney, Sylvia Demarest, who was, incidentally, also the lawyer who had used her clout to contribute the bulk of “new” priests to Economus’s abuser database. Third, by allowing the suit to go to trial, the Diocese had given the plaintiffs the opportunity to demonstrate exactly how diocesan leaders had blamed survivors, intimidated families, and covered up Kos’s abusive history for nearly fifteen years. Fourth, the enormous jury award ($102 million actual damages and $18 million punitive) made international headlines. Last – and most importantly for survivors – the judge and jury both offered remarkably personal apologies to the victims. After issuing their verdict, the jury of ten women and two men read a statement that concluded, “Please admit your guilt and allow these young men to get on with their lives.” The victims’ families rose in an emotional applause that spread throughout the courtroom and culminated in a standing ovation. Amidst this chaotic scene, Judge Anne Ashby made a slightly more choreographed gesture. She removed her judicial robes, walked across the room, sat amongst the jurors, and addressed the plaintiffs’ bench. “I’ve been so close to your tragedy,” Ashby whispered, “It just breaks my heart.
Everybody in this courtroom has been grieving. If anything like this can ever be positive, then let there be healing. Let there be hope.\textsuperscript{366}

News of Judge Ashby’s kindness resounded throughout the survivor community, because it touched on their deepest goal: to have their suffering recognized. If the bishops heard their suffering, survivors believed, then ecumenical reforms and social justice would inevitably follow. Other judges and jurists, in courtrooms across the country, had listened intently to survivors’ testimonies. The difference here was that Judge Ashby went out of her way to emphasize that she had *heard* these victims’ pain.

These victims were strategically leveraging one institutional identity in order to reform another. By publically constructing the Church as a corporate entity, they were able to establish its liability for their abuse (no small feat given the historical privileging of religious institutions within the American judicial system). The first step of healing, simply being *heard*, remained an elusive goal for many survivors, even as they imagined legal testimony as a religious experience, an opportunity for society to absolve them of any feelings of guilt. Survivors unanimously claimed that apologies meant more to them than dollar bills. A new contributor who joined VOCAL in 2002 warned that class-action suits denied survivors the experience of hearing a personal verdict:

Survivors want their day in court. We need to hear a jury say, *‘We believe you and find in favor of the plaintiff.’* But what seemed to be a way to force the Church to acknowledge our pain has often ended up being another burden to carry… When victims take part in a multi-plaintiff lawsuit and find out that the [lead] attorney reached a settlement with the Church, they feel like they have relinquished the very

thing that caused them to join the suit. It wasn’t the money. It was the testimony they wanted to give. It was the public verdict they needed to hear.367

Within this framework, some survivors wanted the secular judicial system to affirm a particular vision of Catholic morality and social justice that they believed the Church was in fact denying. They knew that this expectation was unconventional; American Catholics had spent much of the twentieth century trying to prove there could be a stark separation of church and state.

Survivors were unsuccessful at obtaining ecclesiastical reform. Very few victims ever received the kind of public apology that they so deeply desired to hear from their priest or bishop. After five years of struggling, with a legal team of seven attorneys behind them, to get a day in court, Tom and David Economus accepted a relatively meager financial settlement from the Sky Ranch Foundation. In Tom Economus’s public announcement, “Sky Ranch Pays and Apologizes,” he sounded at pains to convince himself that the legal process had worked. “David and I wanted to be heard. We wanted to right a wrong. We wanted some accountability. This case was never about money.”368 By contrast, his prose exudes conviction when describing the importance of the settlement for his mother:

Finally, the person most affected by our abuse and this lawsuit was our mother. She can now leave the pains of the past behind us and bring about a long overdue healing and closure process to an issue that has dictated our lives for far too many years. The real blame has been placed at the feet of Fr. Murray and others responsible. No longer, do David and I, our mother, or our family assume the pain

or blame of this past.\textsuperscript{369}

Like many other survivors, Economus dreamt of a day when the confessional rite would be reversed, of a moment – however fleeting – when priests would ask survivors to for the grace of absolution.\textsuperscript{370} He was, for example, enraged by Pope John Paul II’s solemn “Day of Pardon Mass” because the pope apologized categorically, thus obfuscating the need to confess any of the institution’s specific crimes. “Maybe it is just me,” Economus fumed, “but I thought an apology was supposed to be directed toward the person you have wronged…You begin with, ‘Bless me father for I have sinned,’ and then you are expected to itemize your sins, one by one. I remember as a child how difficult and painful it was to iterate all of my sins. Yet that is what we were taught by the church was a true confession.”\textsuperscript{371} Given that moral vindication became more and more attainable in courtrooms, survivors could not fathom why their highest Eminence failed to simply say, “I’m sorry.”

Confession here indexes broader meanings than those of the sacrament. Economus conflated apology with the ritual of confession, invoking more conventional links among confession, apology, penance, and ultimately, forgiveness. Confession does not usually entail apology to the person wronged, but rather the iteration of sins to a priest. Sorrow and resolve are necessary. But the ritual does not necessarily involve apology at all; one can receive absolution through confession, but without apology. Most importantly, he inverted

\textsuperscript{369} Economus, “Sky Ranch Pays and Apologizes.”
\textsuperscript{370} While acknowledging a long, painful discourse that eroticizes the confessional towards anti-Catholic ends, it is perhaps crucial to mention that the confessional was one of the main sites of grooming and abuse.
\textsuperscript{371} Missing Link.
the authority at work in confession, such that the priest becomes the penitent, and the
survivor the priest. He imagines himself and other survivors into the role of the
priesthood, reclaiming the confessional as a site of justice. This was a particularly powerful
move for many survivors, for whom the intimate space of the confessional was also a site
where abuse took place, alongside the sacristy, parish schools, and priests’ bedrooms.

In spite of Miller’s and Economus’s failure to get their respective day in court, they
steadfastly endorsed courtrooms as a means for healing. Lawsuits were not, as some
narratives have suggested, a subsequent corruption of the survivor movement; attorneys
were sought out and glorified from the founding of survivor organizations. The earliest
issues of *Missing Link* listed attorneys within the organization’s one-sentence mission
statement, which read “We offer a support group for the victims of clergy abuse,
psychological counseling, investigative services, and referrals to attorneys specializing in
clergy abuse cases.” Every issue of the *Missing Link*, from 1991 to 2005, featured
endorsements for specific attorneys, and lawsuits were the main focus of the majority of
news stories reprinted in the aforementioned “Black Collar Crimes” column. Every
Healing Conference included at least one (up to six) keynote speeches by legal experts.
Two attorneys in particular, Fr. Thomas Doyle and Jeffrey Anderson, epitomize survivors’
understanding of the relationship between lawsuits and healing. At the inaugural
conference that Miller organized, both Anderson and Doyle advised survivors to skip the

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372 In the 1980s, Miller and Blaine had described lawyers as a last resort, but by 1991 they both
advised new survivors to ignore the Church and use the legal system instead.
painful process of going to their bishop. “You won’t get anywhere with Canon Law,”

Doyle explained, “Get a lawyer. Money talks.” Doyle continued:

You got two choices. You can get embroiled in the system. Or, you can circumvent the Church and talk to a good lawyer – that’s what I would suggest. The reality is that the Church’s constitutional claims are not going to prevail. The free exercise of religion is not intended to allow the promulgation of child sexual exploration. Our civil justice system is an effective tool for positive moral change. Lawsuits are a genuine opportunity to force that change. But the sad reality is that we have to sue – pardon me – the shit out of our church to do it.

In a similar vein, Anderson spoke for twenty minutes about his dream of one day suing the Pope. Barbara Blaine, who was in the process of founding her own Chicago nonprofit for victims of clergy abuse (SNAP), whisked survivors in and out of a hotel guest room she had reserved as a space for pairing new victims with local attorneys.

**Calling the Bishops to Accountability**

At the first conference, after reflecting on the “devastating process” that was her failed lawsuit, Miller asked the audience, “So why am I still doing this?” to which she immediately answered, “Because the church still needs to be accountable. Everyone needs to be accountable. The parishioners that sit next to us in the pews need to be accountable. The silence needs to stop.” The word Miller emphasized, “accountability,” has been the catchphrase of the clergy abuse survivor movement from 1991 to the present. Indeed, “accountability” stands at the center of a shared language that survivors, attorneys, and

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375 Doyle, Audiocassette Recording, “Clergy Sexual Abuse.”
376 Miller, Audiocassette recording, “Breaking the Silence.”
judges developed in speaking to one another about their respective goals. In colloquial U.S. English, the verb to account carries an explicitly legal connotation that binds moral responsibility to financial liability. However, the Anglo-Saxon etymology of the term is more muddled, and many of its older meanings are still resonant. Foremost, there is the eschatological need to account for oneself, to reckon for one’s actions in the face of divine judgment. All of these usages are relevant to the survivor’s movement and have likely contributed to its enduring appeal among different generations of Catholic activists.

While these legal and financial meanings are important, the survivor movement is most interested in the moral valances of this term. In “calling the bishops to accountability,” they are asking multiple audiences – priests, Catholic laypersons, secular politicians, and the U.S. legal apparatus – to help them to restore moral accountability within the Roman Catholic church. Seeking legal accountability was the pathway to achieve wider spiritual repair for survivors and to hold the clergy responsible for their injustices. That is, the bureaucratic breakdown was one issue that VOCAL sought to address and reform. But what they sought was the acknowledgment that priests and bishops violated moral norms that rendered survivors vulnerable, betrayed, and broken.

These multi-faceted meanings of accountability became central to VOCAL’s material culture. In their Fall 1994 issue, just in time for the Advent season, VOCAL began to publish the “Demand Accountability” dollar bill. Ideally, VOCAL members would photocopy and distribute the dollar bill to friends and family, such that they would end up in collection baskets across the country. In 1998 alone, Economus printed 25,000 color copies, which he then mailed to zip codes where an abusive priest had recently made
headlines. In spite of these efforts, the bill did not receive much publicity. Only a handful of priests wrote back to Economus expressing their support for the VOCAL. At face value, the bill asked members to donate their weekly offering to the VOCAL instead of their local parish. Additionally, the bill stated the parishioner’s “disapproval of the church leadership’s lack of an appropriate and effective response to the crisis of Clergy Sexual Abuse.” This was the double-edged message that survivors wanted to convey to other Catholics: “accountability” involved not only monetary compensation, but also ecclesiastical changes that would safeguard against future abuses of power. This balance between healing survivors and reforming the priesthood was even more vividly illustrated in the logo for the Fifth National Healing Conference, “Calling the Church to Account,” which reimagined the cross as a scale, balancing clergy at Christ’s right side, survivors at his left. Subsequent printings of the accountability bill featured the “three clergy” logo on the obverse, with the phrase “In God Only We Trust” on the reverse. Over the following years, survivors continued to use the noun “accountability” to describe the deaf ears and silent mouths of church leaders. In 1999, for example, a feature article rhetorically asked, “Where is [Cardinal] Mahoney’s ethical and moral obligation? Where is his accountability? His blind eye, his refusal to speak out on the issue, his hiding behind attorneys, is nothing but shameful.”

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378 Artist unknown. Several versions of the “Demand Accountability” bill were printed from 1994 – 2004, with varying logos, instructions, and colors. The bill described here was the earliest known version, printed within The Missing Link 2, no. 1 (Fall 1994), which was the first issue that included Jay Nelson’s professional eye for graphic design.
379 Mahoney had recently been appointed Senior Advisor to the NCCB Ad-Hoc Committee on Clergy Sexual Abuse.
Most survivor crusades for “accountability” proved as elusive as their quest for healing. When the VOCAL closed in 2005, some members complained that they felt “guilty or dirty” because they had received monetary compensation while failing “to build a system that is accountable to the laity and the morals and values the Church espouses.” Many survivors transferred the fear that they were somehow to blame for their sexual abuse into the new “guilt” of accepting a payoff rather than holding out for ecclesiological reform.

Survivors’ desire to give voice to their suffering and to have their pain heard, alongside the hierarchy’s unwillingness to listen, thus became the central motif that the movement’s leaders drew upon to explain their shift away from the moral authority of the Vatican towards the restorative power of the American judicial system. However, like most narratives of origins this mythical sense of causation overshadows the intricacies of the prolonged, cyclical struggle of other VOCAL members who labored to shift the organization “back” towards spiritual healing.

The Enigma of “Joe” Bernardin

One of the survivors who registered for Miller’s “Breaking the Silence” conference had been hoping to accuse Bernardin in front of the news crews. When Bernardin did not attend, the middle-aged woman from Texas nevertheless proceeded in her attempt to convince journalists that Bernardin had “raped her in a satanic ritual when she was eleven.

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in South Carolina.\textsuperscript{381} Although Miller perceived the woman primarily as an embarrassing liability, the chronology and location the accuser stated were plausible.\textsuperscript{382} Several journalists were intrigued by her story, but it was too risky to print. Two months later, a priest in North Dakota, who had not been at the LINKUP conference, began contacting attorneys, including Jeff Anderson, to see if they would represent him. The priest said that he had been abused by Bernardin as a seminarian, at a sex party hosted by the bishop of Winona, Minnesota. Although Anderson considered the priest a credible witness, they lacked enough evidence to file suit. Simultaneously, a former seminarian from Ohio, Steven Cook, hired one of Blaine’s favorite attorneys, Steven Rubino. Cook, who had recently been diagnosed with AIDS, recalled that Fr. Ellis Harsham had, after months of grooming and abusing him, drugged Cook and taken him to the archbishop’s house, where Bernardin had sexual intercourse with Cook. Rubino filed his suit two days before the start of the annual NCCB meeting. The media frenzy that ensued was, at least within the history of the U.S. Catholic Church, unprecedented.

Cardinal Bernardin, who was then the most widely admired and highest-ranking prelate in the North America, addressed the allegations immediately and head-on. Holding a press conference at his lakeside mansion, Bernardin categorically denied Cook’s story. Furthermore, Bernardin informed the reporters – most of whom had not been at the Linkup conference – about the allegations that the woman from Texas and the priest from North Dakota had made against him. During both that news conference and the dozens of

\textsuperscript{381} Berry, \textit{Vows of Silence}, 89.

\textsuperscript{382} Bernardin grew up in South Carolina, and was ordained in the Diocese of Charleston, where he served in chancery and parishional capacities from 1952 – 1966.
interviews he gave over the following year, Bernardin’s unwavering tone, steady gaze into the cameras, and impeccable calm were, from the viewpoint of public relations management, marvelous.

As the Cardinal held steady, Cook’s case faltered. The hypnotist who had treated Cook was unlicensed, and she had not properly documented Cook’s therapy sessions. Cook reached an out-of-court settlement with the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, dropped the lawsuit against Bernardin, and even attended a Mass led by Bernardin to publically display their reconciliation. Shortly thereafter, the Cardinal announced that he was dying of pancreatic cancer. The abrupt turn of events made the titans of Chicago journalism look amateurish. Embarrassed, local news teams refused to entertain subsequent accusations made against Cardinal Bernardin. National media stopped covering other Chicago survivor movement developments, and LINKUP and SNAP experienced the harsh chill of being de facto blacklisted by news anchors. Chicago survivors did not return to the national spotlight until SNAP recaptured its public integrity by becoming the face of the victims who stepped forward in Boston 2002. But before we get to that, I must add one aside, and it is too significant to be written as a footnote.

To this day, many Chicago survivors continue to believe that Bernardin was an ephebophile. In support of this, they cite an extended set of events that have gone essentially unnoticed in public discourse. First, there is the fact that in his statement Cook never cleared Bernardin, he just said, “I realize now that my memories are unreliable.” Second, survivors cite the timing of Cook and Bernardin’s “reconciliation” Mass in relation to the settlement Cook received from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Third, the
settlement was technically only for the allegations against Fr. Harsham, but the tidiness of it all has led to rampant speculation among survivors, including the rumor of “$3 million, paid secretly to Cooke’s parents,” which was circulated so frequently in the early 1990s that it is now a permanent fixture of survivor folklore. Fourth are subsequent developments in the other allegations brought against Bernardin. The possibility that Cook’s public statement may have been coerced was given additional weight in 2002, when Archbishop John Vlazny told the *Boston Globe* that the North Dakota man’s retraction letter was a required condition of the settlement money paid to him by the Diocese of Winona.\(^{383}\)

I have not seen any evidence to suggest that Bernardin ever engaged in criminal sexual conduct of any sort. Of Bernardin’s alleged criminal activities, all I can verify is that he was negligent in his mishandling of Mayer and other abusive priests.\(^{384}\) This uncertainty does not pose a large problem here, because the goal of my study is to understand the Chicago survivor community, not to verify or scrutinize any of the allegations they have made. What is paramount here is that many Chicago survivors continue to hold Bernardin in this complex and ambivalent status of a courageous prelate who may have also been a closeted ephebophile.

Further muddling the picture, a lesser number of Chicago survivors not only believed in Bernardin’s innocence, but also felt a strong, loving connection to the deceased Cardinal. Tom Economus lamented the Cardinal’s death. Economus was the only survivor


\(^{384}\) That negligence enabled the abuse of additional children, not only in Chicago but across the country. Were he alive in today’s judicial environment, it is likely that Bernardin would have been prosecuted for criminal negligence.
leader invited to Bernardin’s funeral, and he reveled openly in the status he felt that gesture had extended to the survivor movement:

The fact that I was invited and represented all victims and survivors was a testimony to the respect for this movement of the Cardinal and the Diocese of Chicago. I was seated in the third pew, directly behind Vice President Gore and his wife. Next to them were Governor and Mrs. Edgar, Mayor Daley and Maggie, Senators Durbin and Moseley Braun, and the President’s Cabinet Members Panetta, Cisneros, and Shalala. To my right was Ed Roswell, to my left former mayor Jane Byrne… The ceremony was befitting of a pope… As I sat through the service, I experienced feelings of sadness, outrage, anger, and relief, knowing that the only reason I was attending was because of the late cardinal’s refusal to deal with the clergy abuse problem in Chicago … For me, it was very personal. I remembered the first time I met Cardinal Bernardin and how angry both of us were. Six years later, he and I had learned how to work with each other, and to build a foundation that could be used as a model for all other dioceses. There was a mutual respect… Of all the Roman Catholic bishops, Cardinal Bernardin was the only one who believed in this movement and supported its efforts.  

Rick Springer, who became the de facto leader of Chicago’s LINKUP meetings after Tom’s death in 2002, has an even fonder recollection of Bernardin. On one of my first visits into his home, Rick insisted on giving me DVD recording of the 1996 live television broadcast of Cardinal Bernardin’s funeral. As we sat and watched the first twenty minutes of the service, he wept, explaining, “He was a great, great man. We were all just so devastated when he died.” This survivor had lovingly recorded the live broadcast to VHS tape, which he then copied and gave to other survivors over the following months. More than a decade later (when new VHS players were getting harder and harder to find), Rick repeated the effort by digitizing the recording onto a dozen DVDs, so that the

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386 Fieldnotes.
remnants of his former LINKUP friends could continue to relive that moment in the city’s history. “How could you love the man whose very office had ignored your efforts to bring the priest that had abused you to justice?” I thought to myself.

Bernardin’s biographers – who lean towards the hagiographic in their glowing, uncritical descriptions of “Brother Joseph” – have likewise described Bernardin’s funeral as a moment when the city, perhaps even the nation, came together in awe of “the gentlest of men,” “a great man who had lived a good life.” In his dying days, Bernardin’s visitors and callers had comprised a venerated who’s who list in American religion and politics, including President Bill Clinton and the Dalai Lama. Bernardin’s broad national popularity stemmed in part from personal gifts: his charismatic smile, his disarmingly gentle tone of voice, and his capacity to project consensus amid chaos. Even the way he died seemed angelic. His reflections on death – offered informally to reporters’ microphones and more carefully penned as the closing episodes of his memoirs – projected the quintessential model that baby-boomers might make peace with the world before leaving it.

Theologically, Bernardin had combatted the stereotype that Catholicism was a religion handed down from above, instead embracing the Vatican II impulse that everyday lay Catholics should have a voice in the theology and ecclesiology of their church. Although never fully developed, his metaphor of the “seamless garment,” gestured

at in so many of his speeches on what he called the “consistent ethic of life,” had captivated millions of Catholic minds.

Opposite this picturesque portrait of Bernardin the saint, or – as Joseph Kennedy has suggested, “Bernardin the Christ”\(^{390}\) – are the experiences of survivors like Jeanne Miller and the never-definitively-investigated accusation by Cincinnati resident Steven Cook. My focus here has not been to scrutinize the possibility that Bernardin was an abuser, but simply to evaluate the role the Cardinal played in the formation of the Chicago survivor movement. As I analyze in the following chapter, the subsequent chill in Chicago media coverage froze local survivors out of the national spotlight. But Chicago survivors continued to work on their own healing.

CHAPTER 5

Chicago After Boston: Coalition Building and Movement Growth, 1992 – 2012

This first half of this chapter analyzes the tensions between LINKUP and SNAP, from 1992 to 2002. I explore these tensions primarily through the eyes of just two Chicago victims, Rick Springer and Bobbie Sitterling. Of the forty Chicago survivors interviewed during my research, Rick and Bobbie alone have belonged to all the survivor organizations active in Chicago since 1992. Their perspectives provide a valuable window into the undocumented conflicts among Chicago survivors; the legacy of LINKUP as it was folded through Crowley’s CTA into the new CCC; and the differences between CCC and the seven VOTF charters that were simultaneously founded in Chicago.

The second half of the chapter critically examines the history of the Chicago survivor movement, from 2002 to 2012, with particular attention to the tensions within and among the coalition that formed, in the wake of Boston, among LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC. In 2002, the events in Boston inspired Crowley’s CTA to found CCC, an implicit acknowledgement that their national organization had failed to grasp the extent of the abuse crisis and that their local chapter had failed to support Chicago survivors. Concurrently, seven local VOTF chapters sprang up across Chicagoland, of which only Coalition of Concerned Catholics-Chicagoland Voice of the Faithful exists today. To survivors, the most important aspect of CCC-CVOTF was that they bear bodily witness –
both individually in the pews of their parishes and collectively at protests and survivor events – to the truth of the abuses. By standing alongside survivors, these advocacy organizations forged lasting bonds with SNAP. Such support is not only moral, but also financial; since 2003, VOTF has been far and away the largest annual donor to SNAP.

Finally, I analyze how these new communities also helped a core contingent from LINKUP fill the social and emotional pain they felt in the wake of Economus’s death and the closure of the Farm.

I. Religious Bodies in Tension: The Intertwined Apostolates of LINKUP and SNAP

After Blaine and Economus, Rick Springer (1937 to 2014) was perhaps the most recognizable fixture within the Chicago survivor movement. Although rarely acknowledged in media photographs, Springer participated in nearly every local survivor action until his recent passing. Springer was often the first person Blaine turned to when she needed a male body at a media event, holding a poster-sized photograph of the long-lost boyish self who was abused. Springer was even closer to Economus, serving for ten years as Tom’s personal driver and describing Tom as “the only real friend I ever had.”

When Economus appeared on the Larry King Show, he was invited to bring one guest. He chose Rick, and NBC paid for a chauffeured limousine to pick each of them up at their residences.

But Rick, who had dropped out of high school after being abused as a nine-year-old seminarian, wasn’t much use to Tom in the office, where Economus needed help writing,

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editing, and laying out the Missing Link newsletter and other official LINKUP publications. No one helped Economus more in the office than Bobbie Sitterling, a female survivor who, like Blaine, had been victimized from adolescence through early adulthood. Bobbie was one of LINKUP’s most active volunteers. Although she attended and co-organized protests and letter writing campaigns, Bobbie was also quieter, introspective, and far more bookish than most survivors. Jack, Bobbie’s husband of 40 years, accompanied Bobbie to every survivor event she attended. Each Wednesday night, Jack and Bobbie commuted more than an hour each way to help Economus with the Missing Link newsletters and other office work. As part of this weekly routine, Jack and Bobbie brought along their daughter, Stephanie, and she in turn became a behind-the-scenes laborer for LINKUP as well. The entire Sitterling family grew close to Economus, and Jack and Bobbie thought of him “like a brother.” Stephanie and her husband referred to Economus as “uncle.”

Bobbie summarized the relationship between LINKUP and SNAP as competitive at first, then distrustful as that competition continued over the following years. “I belonged to both, but it was very tough on me,” said Bobbie, adding, “it was like, both Barbara and Jeanne thought you had to choose just one.” Until 2003, SNAP did not organize its own annual retreats; rather, Bobbie told me, Blaine routinely “crashed the party” at LINKUP events. Such tactics put the groups’ overlapping members, particularly Bobbie and Rick, into the tense situation of having to apologize to their LINKUP colleagues for Blaine’s

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392 Interview with the author, June 20, 2012.
393 Interview with the author, June 20, 2012.
impoliteness. “I remember how pissed Jeanne was in 1992,” Rick told me. He continued, “She was so pissed off at Barbara for going behind her back and bringing in all these lawyers, and I had to physically separate the two of them to keep the peace. I ended up spending half the conference just trying to keep Barbara and Jeanne from being in the same room.”

When I asked Miller about Blaine’s tactics, she recalled being “more annoyed than upset.” And when I have broached the topic in several interviews with Blaine, she said, “Oh, I know what you mean, but that was all just some little misunderstanding.”

Miller and Blaine’s savvy, professional responses today contradict my other textual and ethnographic sources. Survivors, in their embodied memories, recall the struggle as the defining characteristic of those early years in the Chicago movement. “There must have been something deep, Jeanne and Barbara were just so different, but I can’t really put my finger on it,” Bobbie told me. Other observers, both inside the movement and in the news media, have likewise noted the divergence without a clear lens for explaining the rift.

Indeed, on paper, one might have expected that Miller and Blaine could have been the closest of allies. The two women had so much in common. Both Miller and Blaine had been immersed in the Catholic peace movement; both women had felt betrayed by Cardinal Bernardin’s initial responses to their appeals; both women had sought healing and understanding through graduate work in theology at Loyola University; and, finding those degrees in divinity insufficient for answering the questions of faith that haunted their suffering, both Miller and Blaine completed law degrees at DePaul University. Likewise,

394 Interview with the author, May 5, 2011.
395 Interview with the author, August 18, 2014.
396 Interview with the author, March 11, 2013.
Blaine and Steffel shared much in common; they had literally broken bread for much of the decade that preceded the “Breaking the Silence” conference, giving each other communion each week at Patty Crowley’s intentional Eucharistic community.

I am arguing that, while Blaine and Steffel’s commonalities were not superficial, we risk in emphasizing these similarities the profound spiritual rifts embodied in each woman’s past. Namely, Blaine and Steffel had conflicting beliefs about the role the institutional Church should play in realizing the Mystical Body of Christ. Miller’s approach reflected her dedication to St. Edna’s parish. Steffel’s optimism likewise stemmed from the fact the Church was the only employer she’d ever known. By contrast, Blaine’s vocation had been much less dependent on the institutional Church. In her fifteen years as a Catholic Worker, Blaine was on the front lines of a Catholic counterculture that credited the institutional Church only when it provided monetary funding for her mission. Blaine sought social justice through Poleyn and Day’s distinctively Catholic eyes, but she waged that engagement predominantly on secular turf and, increasingly, through the language and culture of the American juridical-industrial complex.

In other words, the spiritual formation of the movement’s founders had clear effects on the character and style of the nation’s first two survivor organizations. From its inception through the late 1990s, LINKUP strived to work within the Church. Even after her betrayal by Cardinal Bernardin, Jeanne Miller kept faith in the institutional resolutions put forward within the USCCB. When Miller left LINKUP in 1992, her charismatic authority was transferred to Tom Economus. Although more confrontational than Miller, Economus’s style and tactics remained focused on achieving institutional reforms. This
model of cooperative dialogue – which seemed to come so naturally to Miller, Economus, and Steffel – reflected Patty Crowley’s profound legacy in the Chicago survivor movement. From Crowley’s CFM, LINKUP inherited a model of Catholic Action that envisioned priests and bishops as allies, not adversaries. Over time, LINKUP’s members grew increasingly skeptical of the Church’s assertion that it cared about survivors. But from 1982 to 1996, at least, LINKUP leaders were doggedly attached to the dream that survivors would one day be welcomed back into the pews not only as lay equals, but as a community of the oppressed, as witnesses to prophetic truths that the Church had long ignored.

Barbara Blaine, by contrast, was never interested in working with the bishops. Like her irreverent mentor Nina Polcyn, and her blessed mother, Dorothy Day, Blaine embodied a more militant personalism. Following the Catholic Worker modus within which she founded SNAP, Blaine strived to achieve social justice with or without the Church’s cooperation. Blaine’s vision of achieving justice for victims outside of the Church became as implacable (and controversial) as Day’s outspoken pacifism. Like Polcyn, Blaine retained intimate relationships with a small core of Catholic bishops and priests, particularly Bishop Tom Gumbleton, Fr. Tom Doyle, and a cadre of former priests headed by Gary Wills, Robert McClory, and A.W. Richard Sipe. These were the Sheil and Egan of Blaine’s spiritual universe. It was less that Blaine disliked all priests than that she chose to trust only those who openly denounced the diocesan, USCCB, and Vatican responses to victims.
These founders’ pasts inflected strongly the broader growth and membership of their respective organizations. For example, although both LINKUP and SNAP held monthly self-help meetings for victims, the choreography of LINKUP’s meetings varied dramatically from those of SNAP. At LINKUP’s monthly meetings, Miller and later Springer welcomed all survivors, and they encouraged attendees to bring friends or loved ones to help support them. The LINKUP meetings were grassroots to the core. At LINKUP, authority was shared and structure was malleable. Anyone could start the meeting with a story or prayer; survivors could speak or remain silent; advocates could identify as such without specifying their relationship to a direct victim. LINKUP’s goal, particularly under the leadership of Steffel and Economus, was to seek restorative justice by reintegrating the liturgy and pastoral care into survivors’ everyday lives. Under Economus’s tenure, LINKUP turned decisively away from the courts and towards alternative spirituality for healing.

**Anger, Suffering, and Healing**

After Miller’s departure, the mission of LINKUP was rearticulated as a quest for healing. Drawing heavily on their respective experiences of oppression within the Church, Economus and Steffel envisioned this as a shift from Miller’s paradigm of listening to and speaking for survivors to a model of empowering victims to speak on their own. This theology was clear, for example, in the linguistic shift from victim to survivorhood. One of Economus’s first acts as the new President of LINKUP had been to insist on this change within the organization’s nomenclature:
We have once again changed the official name of the Linkup – this time from Victims of Clergy Abuse Linkup to Survivors of Clergy Abuse Linkup. This reflects the ongoing evolution of our movement. As we individually and collectively recover and grow stronger, leaving behind the horror and pain of our abuse, we reclaim our power. Our new name demonstrates our strength at having overcome the shame we were given and our determination to be healed. We now know that the justice of prosecution, the satisfaction of monetary settlements as admissions of guilt, will never fill the emptiness, will never magically transform us into individuals free to hope, love, complete. That, my friends, is an interior journey and we are at the controls. We are at the driver’s seat. That is why we have changed our name from Victims to Survivors.”

Although there was a distinctively Catholic tone to Economus’s liberationist language, his personal search for healing had led him progressively away from the Roman Catholic altar, and slowly that trajectory came to pervade the official agenda of the broader community of survivors to which he ministered.

During the early years of his leadership, Economus tried to explore his “inner spirituality” as part of what he termed “the journey towards healing.” On a particularly fateful trip in 1992, Economus flew to the Berkshires in Massachusetts, where he attended a three-day yoga retreat held at a Jesuit seminary. The new age ambiance fueled within him a "renewed sense of spirituality," which Economus could only explain in contrast to his perception of Roman Catholic ecclesiology. "The Catholic sense of spirituality was to stand up, sit down, kneel, listen to the priest, then go away... We were groomed by the Roman Catholic Church as children to give our spiritual power over to the priest, to the bishop, to the cardinal, to the pope. And our only spiritual responsibility was to check in,

for one hour, just once a week. That just didn't fit for me." The juxtaposition between yoga and the Jesuit setting moved Economus to speak openly to the other attendees about his faith. It was only after he rearticulated himself as an ailing Catholic that five of the other yoga participants identified themselves bishops from the Independent Holy Catholic Church. They encouraged him to learn more about their group, and after a year and a half of apprenticeship Economus decided to seek ordination. Invitations to the ceremony were sent to all Missing Link subscribers, with the special note: “Tom is devoting his First Mass at Ordination to you – a "healing mass" – for all survivors, your families and friends who have suffered. We rejoice. He is truly an authentic minister.”

Economus was ordained as a priest of the Independent Holy Catholic Church on Palm Sunday, March 27, 1994. Fr. Tom Doyle had reserved the U.S. naval chapel in Glenview for the event. Into his own ordination ceremony, Economus incorporated fourteen other survivors as readers, presenters, and musicians. The two-hour ceremony contained all the hallmarks of the Roman Catholic Mass, including a processional, the Penitential Rite, Liturgy of the Word, Gospel readings, the Litany of Saints, the Eucharist, the Sign of Peace, the Solemn Blessing, concluding rites, and a recessional. In his first official act as a priest, Economus offered the Eucharist to all of the survivors in attendance. After Communion, Economus asked his fellow survivors to join him outside for a short "Meditation Healing Service," where he preached about the relationship between their abuse and Christ's cross:

398 Frontline interview with Tom Economus, 1999.
God, the world is full of pain; each of us has a share. For some, it is a slight burden. For others it is crushing. But every Christian can turn it into a blessing...and even our suffering becomes part of the price of the world's redemption as we turn it into compassion for others. Pain does not then cease to be pain; but it ceases to be barren pain; and in kinship with Christ upon the cross and embracing each other's suffering, we are no longer isolated. We find new strength for bearing pain, and even making it the means by which our hearts are more fully open towards perfect love. Accomplish this in us through Christ our Lord.\(^{400}\)

From that day forward, the chief priest of LINKUP almost always wore his collar in public. Economus’s effort to reappropriate the symbol stirred controversy within and among survivors. The collar was, after all, the paradigmatic emblem with which many victims associated their physical and spiritual betrayal. In spite of the fact that, just two years prior, Fr. Andrew Greeley had been booed for wearing a collar at the “Breaking the Silence” conference, Economus insisted that victims needed to rekindle their faith in order to find healing.

In this effort to reclaim the faith that was stolen from them as children, LINKUP survivors developed a striking, if ultimately ephemeral, set of new alternative Catholic rituals. In tandem with their experiences of clinical treatment within the broader “secular” therapeutic state, LINKUP survivors experimented with (i) monthly healing meetings, (ii) religious art therapy, (iii) public monuments to their collective suffering.

A core contingent of LINKUP survivors wanted to gather regularly to talk about their struggles of faith. The SNAP meetings were insufficient, Rick Springer and Bobbie Sitterling told me, for three reasons. First, although Blaine advertised her meetings as

\(^{400}\) Economus’s Ordination Program, 27 March 1994.
monthly, in practice her small Chicago group met sporadically, more like once every three or four months from 1992 to 1999. In Bobbie’s words, “SNAP was just itty-bitty back then; these occasional meetings with no annual conferences or national events.” Part of the reason for this unpredictable schedule came from Blaine’s concerns about confidentiality and privacy. To survivors like Bobbie, it was not that such concerns were illegitimate so much as Blaine seemed to relish making her meetings “as melodramatic as possible.” “With Barbara, everything had to be so secretive all of the time – where they took place, when they would meet, how to become a part of the telephone chain – it just seemed like it was more about her than about the rest of us.” The second reason some survivors found SNAP meetings wanting was because discussions of renewing one’s faith were, de facto, off limits. Spirituality was an unspoken taboo within SNAP. According to Rick, “Barbara wouldn’t let me talk about it – if you said, ‘I think I might want to go try going to Mass,’ or even just ‘I was thinking about trying to go to a new [Protestant] church with a friend’ – she would shoot you this dirty look and say that it was time for someone else to talk.” More explicitly, Blaine banned other topics, including the giving of practical advice to fellow survivors, from those early SNAP meetings. The pomp and circumstance of it all made Springer feel like he was being stripped of his spirituality all over again:

I went to all of Barbara’s meetings for the first few years, but I really didn’t like the way they were run. It was structured like a military. People were only given a very

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401 Bobbie Sitterling, interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
402 Sitterling, interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
403 Sitterling, interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
404 Springer, interview with the author, June 5, 2011.
limited amount of time to talk, and there were lots of things we weren’t allowed to talk about. There were so many rules. It was stifling. Looking back, I always came away from SNAP meetings feeling angrier than when I entered them. There’s an aura of anger there, but there wasn’t any attempt to heal each other. Instead, it almost felt like a ‘can-you-top-that-last-story?’ kind of dynamic. Barbara wanted that. She wanted the most scandalizing stories. [Her model] was great for first-time survivors, because they could share their entire story real quick and get it all out on the table. But it never went any deeper. It was less helpful after that.405

With Steffel’s encouragement and Economus’s help, Springer and Nancy Briggs began running a monthly Chicago support group through LINKUP. From 1993 to 2014 (nearly a decade beyond the official collapse of LINKUP), Springer hosted these alternative monthly healing meetings, with an eye towards openness, flexibility, and real-world coping strategies for survivors.

The LINKUP meetings were thus created in dialogue against Blaine’s SNAP meetings. In addition to being more regular and less constrained than Blaine’s group, the monthly LINKUP meeting began to take on an identity of its own. First, LINKUP invited all Chicago clergy abuse survivors, not just those abused within Roman Catholicism, to the meetings. Secondly, Springer’s group articulated itself as a space for survivors to ask questions, rather than an altar at which “some priest” would claim to have answers. In advertising the meetings, Economus wrote, “Spiritual questions only arise in a context of community. We learn from one another. As you seek to find a balm for your spiritual wounds, I hope you will consider this a safe place to dialogue about your anger toward God, the meaning of forgiveness, church, and spiritual life.”406 LINKUP leaders

405 Springer, interview with the author, June 20, 2012.
acknowledged that most survivors were still suffering. In anticipation that many survivors might be angriest at God, Springer’s support group welcomed discussion on matters of spirituality and faith.\(^{407}\) The third and final major difference between LINKUP and SNAP meetings was that Springer’s group welcomed family members and other non-physical-victims to the table. Although they had insufficient funding to continue the ministry, from 1994 to 1996 LINKUP even experimented with an additional monthly Chicago support group specifically aimed at the pastoral needs of the victims’ spouses and children.\(^{408}\)

Springer’s approach nevertheless created its own set of challenges. The largest problem LINKUP’s support group faced was the question of forgiveness. While some survivors were adamant that forgiveness was a prerequisite for spiritual healing, other members felt equally strongly that it was the Church that should be asking survivors for forgiveness, rather than punishing them. Officially, the group never sought to resolve this impasse, advocating instead that each survivor should examine his or her conscience in making the decision of whether or not to forgive their abuser(s):

> Forgiveness is a matter of individual conscience… Remember, survivors, you did nothing wrong! You did not cause the abuse nor are you responsible for the abuser’s behavior. Forgiving your abuser and other people who knew about the abuse but who failed to protect you is your choice.\(^{409}\)


\(^{409}\) Economus, “Buzz Words,” *Missing Link* 6, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 1. Unofficially, however, the majority of Chicago survivors in Springer’s group came to feel that they could forgive the individual, if not the institution, that wronged them. Several local survivors made efforts to arrange meetings with their abusers in hopes of spiritual reconciliation.
An equally pressing issue became the role of prayer at LINKUP’s monthly support meetings. Many of the other Catholic survivors were comfortable praying to the Blessed Mother, St. Francis, and St. Catherine of Sienna, if not to Jesus or God (the Father) directly. But that led to an impasse with LINKUP’s stated ecumenism, leading Springer to feel like it was “virtually impossible to set up any sort of prayer service.”

The challenge of ecumenical rituals spilled beyond Springer’s local support group and into the national gatherings of LINKUP, with the effect, ultimately, of driving away most of the non-Catholics who had joined the organization in the early 1990s. Although Protestants and Jews had never comprised more than 10% of LINKUP’s membership, their attrition sparked a stark moment of critical introspection for LINKUP leaders: *If they no longer felt welcome in the Roman Catholic parishes of their youth, but their devotional practices drove Protestants away, then what were they?* The answer, Steffel and Economus proclaimed, was that survivors were alone in the wilderness, speaking truth to power like the martyrs and prophets of the Hebrew Testament:

> Since the Linkup wants to have a big enough tent to accommodate all survivors of all faiths and not trigger or offend anyone, it has been virtually impossible to set up any sort of prayer service at the Conferences. Our inability has left survivors and victims with no spiritual recourse but themselves or the churches in which they were injured. The Movement is at a crossroads. We can declare our work accomplished, pack our tents and go home… Or we can regroup and reconfigure for the long-haul. The need for watchdogs, for witnesses, to testify publicly to the grim realities of clergy sexual abuse won’t go away. This disbelieving world needs reminded. People need to be taught. Someone must continue to speak out and call for ecclesiastical accountability, like the prophets of the Old Testament. Who can

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do this better than survivors? And if we don’t, who will?\footnote{Economus, “The Survivors Movement at a Crossroads,” 1.}

These internal tensions defined LINKUP from within. From 1992 until Economus’s death, the organization struggled to define the uncharted waters between prayer and liturgy, lawsuits and activism, retribution and healing. I point this out not to suggest that LINKUP was naive or unsuccessful, but rather to emphasize that the politics of survivorhood were fluid and dynamic. It was easier for Rick and Bobbie to name what they disliked about Blaine’s support group than it was for them to create an equally successful alternative.

Outside of Springer’s monthly support group, LINKUP survivors were also experimenting \textit{en masse} with the technologies of the modern therapeutic state. Some methods required the strict supervision of medical professionals, such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). Economus lauded EMDR at LINKUP’s national conferences, in part because of how helpful his dear friend Bobbie had found it.\footnote{Indeed, alongside soldiers returning from Desert Storm, survivors of clergy sexual abuse were among the first to populations of patients to bring EMDR to market as a widespread approach to treating PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Cf. 1995 Conference Registration Form, \textit{Missing Link} 3, no. 1 (Spring 1995), 15.} Other methods, particularly those which required little or no formal oversight, spread even more quickly throughout the survivor movement. Art therapies, in particular, became extremely popular among local LINKUP members. Through poetry, drawing, and sculpture, Chicago members sought to give form to their newfound voices. It was an effort to embody, to make flesh not only their pain but also their journey to healing. At its 1993 national conference, LINKP ran art therapy workshops including “Using Art to Heal,” “The Music Within You,” and “Women’s Psychotherapy Group: Integrating Creativity
with Healing.” The response from survivors was overwhelming, and for a moment Steffel and Economus imagined publishing multiple volumes of survivor poetry and artwork: “We are collecting an anthology of writing and art for the purpose of healing sexual abuse… Disclosure of abuse, even from years ago, is essential to recovery. Through creative forms, people who are healing can express the inexplicable.”

In 1994, Economus chartered a tour bus to take local survivors for a weekend to Ann Arbor, Michigan, to participate in “The Art of Surviving – a traveling exhibit of visual performance art to heal adult survivors of sexual abuse.”

Although a fuller examination of survivor artwork is beyond the limits of this chapter, I want to analyze at least one poem here. One of the earliest poems LINKUP published was “Join Your Voice with Mine,” by local victim Marilyn Wells. The poem talks about a fire burning within Wells’ soul, a fire of hatred and resentment:

… You used your power as a priest to take control, and never gave a single thought to the effect on me. So I will stand up strong and tall and tell the world the truth. I’ll say I was a victim of your priest abuse.

And I’ll send a message now to those who are in pain – The abuse was not our fault. You too can be whole again! Start to tell your story and the pain you always feel. With each new revelation, you’ll begin to heal.

So when you join your voice with mine we will be heard for miles. With our strength could prevent abuse of some small child And if we can spare just one innocent’s life from the same pain

413 Missing Link v1n4, Fall 1993, 23.
the fire now of speaking out will not have ben in vain.\footnote{Marilyn Wells, “Join Your Voice With Mine,” The Missing Link, Vol. 2 No. 1, 1994, 19. (emphasis original)}

Wells’s poem explains how the act of voicing her abuse transformed her. Note that the viewpoint of the speaker shifts twice, first from silence to victim, then from victim to prophet. “Truth,” here, is the identity of victimization, and the revelations of others abused further liberate survivors. Finally, in this 1994 poem we already begin to see – some eighteen years earlier – the sense of national responsibility and chosenness that reemerged full force within the local survivor movement in the wake of the 2012 Penn State scandal (analyzed in the following chapter). At any rate, Wells’ poem inspired Economus and Steffel to add a new section to the \textit{Missing Link}, and from 1995 to 2003 every issue of the newsletter included their solicitation for “the submission of survivor stories, poetry, or artwork.”

Beginning as early as 1995, LINKUP survivors also sought to memorialize their collective suffering through public art. Two particularly important works were unveiled at the 1995 LINKUP Healing Conference. First, LINKUP rented an extra 15,000 square foot exhibition hall to launch a travelling exhibit of “paintings and drawings portraying the pain of the victims of the Christian Brothers in Ontario.”\footnote{Registration Form, \textit{Missing Link} 3, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 3.} Secondly, Steffel unveiled “The Survivor’s Quilt,” a 600 square foot quilt comprised of one foot squares submitted by individual survivors from across the country. After the quilt served as the background stage for the 1995 Conference, it was divided into smaller quilts that could be carried at survivor events. Smaller quilts were made for each successive conference until 1999. “The
“Survivor’s Quilt” was inspired, of course, by the AIDS Quilt, which was created in 1987 and is now so large that it weighs 54 tons. At the same time, the LINKUP quilt deserves fuller attention than it has received, particularly insofar as it provides an unparalleled entry point into the countercultural artwork of abuse survivors.\footnote{I have not been able to track down the quilt, nor have I found photographs of sufficient quality to analyze even a few dozen of its panels.} Nearly all of the 1’x1’ panels in the Survivor’s Quilt depict religious subjects, including some incredible renderings of Biblical stories and countercultural ecclesiology. There is an image of Adam and Eve as children, pleading with God to give them clothing. Another panel shows a gigantic angel destroying a brick church with his bare hands, while the parishioners are perched atop the angel’s head and shoulders, applauding his cleansing fists of rage.

The Veil Separating LINKUP and SNAP

As such images suggest, many LINKUP members continued to express anger, pain, and resentment even as they sought healing. During the 1990s, LINKUP and SNAP never really competed for funding or membership numbers. LINKUP had thousands of dues-paying members, whereas SNAP counted barely two dozen prior to 2002. Nevertheless, they competed ideologically. Blaine sought to forge survivors into a lay apostolate that was militant, hierarchical, destructive, and vengeful. Economus attempted to steer survivors’ pain into a more creative and constructive dialogue that not only made room for, but also openly encouraged survivors to undertake work with their Church. The two leaders knew how to get under each other’s skin, and they were often unsparing in their depictions of
one another. In a thinly coded letter reprinted on the front page of the Missing Link, subtitled “Reclaiming the Survivor Movement,” Economus criticized Blaine’s aggressive tactics as the re-victimization of survivors:

This letter has been very difficult for me to write… The Survivors Movement is in full swing. However, the only thing missing is the survivors… The victims are left powerless in the shadow of their own movement. Many people garnered fame and fortune from our molestation. Because of our vulnerability and desire to be heard, we have again been revictimized… Even victims have revictimized each other. There are some who claim the movement as their own, allowing no one else in… who have not yet healed and are preventing their followers from healing and moving forward.418

This struggle to heal not just bodies and minds, but particularly the faith and spirituality of survivors, defined LINKUP’s mission as distinct from SNAP’s. But LINKUP survivors also continued to resort to lawsuits, they also expressed anger and rage at the Church, and particularly outside of Chicago more and more survivors began to see the struggle for justice through Blaine’s eyes.

In part because of the obstinate stance she had taken against Cardinal Bernardin in 1993, Chicago reporters were hesitant to turn to Blaine for comments on the emerging scandal in Boston. But as days turned into weeks without any statements from LINKUP, Blaine emerged as the voice of survivors in the national news media. It would have been convenient for Economus’s grieving friends to have blamed Blaine, or simply for them to lament the coincidental timing of Economus’s death. However, neither Rick nor Bobbie felt discouraged by Blaine’s in-your-face persona. Rather, they speak about Blaine as a

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necessary complement to LINKUP, the inevitable “megaphone” needed for survivors to break through the bishops’ long silence.

Bobbie didn’t like SNAP’s monthly meetings. “I wanted nothing to do with the SNAP meetings,” Bobbie said, claiming, “Barbara would use victims for her own purposes.” In my subsequent conversations with Bobbie, she never wavered on this issue of Blaine’s priorities. “When a survivor was no longer useful to her, Barbara would just discard you; she wouldn’t even return your phone calls.” Nevertheless, Bobbie and her family have attended every annual SNAP conference since 2003; they continue to support Blaine’s agenda via monthly financial donations to SNAP; and they routinely help SNAP by attending the local protests and press conferences that Blaine organizes. When I brought this pattern to Bobbie’s attention, she responded, “What SNAP does is important. No one else is as good as Barbara at doing it.” In summarizing her varying affinity for the LINKUP and SNAP, Bobbie told me, “Tom was in it for survivors. Barbara’s in it for the long haul.” Jack likewise credited Blaine’s professionalism for SNAP’s success, particularly her foresight in using a direct mailing list, her savvy in using the internet and social media for fundraising campaigns, and her insistence on appointing to the SNAP board of trustees “businessmen and lawyers, instead of victims.” Similarly, Rick often described Blaine as “smart,” sometimes adding “smarter than the rest of us.”

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419 Sitterling, Interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
420 Sitterling Interview with the author, March 7, 2013.
421 Sitterling Interview with the author, March 7, 2013.
422 Sitterling Interview with the author, March 7, 2013.
423 Sitterling Interview with the author, March 7, 2013.
From the beginning of my fieldwork, many survivors warned me about getting “burned out.” “This movement has a way of killing people,” I was told several times. Another common phrasing was, “This work tends to ruin people’s relationships.” So many devoted supporters have come and gone that such warnings have become a part of the collective consciences of the Chicago survivor community. After formally founding LINKUP, Miller had stayed in the survivor movement for just one year. Economus then led LINKUP for nearly a decade. Steffel lasted slightly longer, officially leaving the organization just after Tom’s death. The tenure of some other LINKUP board members, from Gary Hayes to Jay Nelson, was measured in months, not years. The founders of CCC and VOTF (discussed below) likewise lasted only months in their passion. When thought of in relation to these patterns, Blaine is an outlier. She has now led SNAP for more than a quarter century. That longevity, matched only by a handful of survivors in less visible roles, like Bobbie and Rick, is part of what has made Blaine so influential. But historically, the event that enabled the ascendancy of Blaine’s SNAP is much more concrete: it was Boston, 2002, that transformed Blaine into the international spokeswoman she is today. For the Chicago survivor movement, this experience was inseparable from the passing of their most charismatic leader, Linkup’s Tom Economus.

Tom Economus’s Death

In 1997, Economus was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Economus celebrated the illness as a challenge to his humanity and to his faith, and when he “beat it,” Economus

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425 Fieldnotes September 2011, November 2011.
proclaimed survivorhood as a victory of the mind and spirit over one’s bodily pain. I will not dwell on this discourse, but it is worth examining here because it speaks profoundly to the intersections between the Chicago survivor movement and the broader discourse of survivorhood celebrated throughout the 1990s-era of herbal supplements and self-help talk shows. Of equal if not greater import, Economus’s consequent turn towards “Eastern philosophy” foreshadowed the broader turn LINKUP took, over the following five years and particularly after Economus’s death, towards alternative altars and new age spiritualties. In the letter informing LINKUP’s membership that he had survived, Economus wrote:

As most of you know, this past summer I was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. I undertook an aggressive treatment that included both Eastern and Western medicines… From the onset, I decided that I was not going to become a victim to this cancer. I remember going into the bathroom and staring at myself in the mirror and yelling, “You have cancer. You will get through it. You will recover… I went on the internet and joined several chat groups that provided additional support on alternative medicines and Eastern philosophy… I felt it was time to incorporate modern technology with holistic healing, herbs, and vitamins; time to mix East with West and say ‘yes’ to the ‘mind, body, and spirit as one’ philosophy… including group therapy, individual therapy, meditation, massage therapy, and social activities…. I could accept cancer as a death sentence and wait to die. I could accept cancer as a medical reality and then die. Or I could accept cancer as part of me and move forward, creating a quality of life that is good and comfortable. I opted for the latter. I am healing, and I will recover from this cancer.

Unfortunately, Economus’s good health was short-lived. In September 2001, he was diagnosed with bone cancer.

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Economus’s second bout of cancer hit many LINKUP survivors hard, and his illness demanded even more sacrifices of Rick and the Sitterlings. Rick drove Economus to all of his doctor’s appointments, chauffeured him to lunches, and tried to bring dinner to Economus as much as his taxi-driving schedule allowed. To help Economus get his financial affairs in order, Rick “loaned” him the balance in his savings account. “I knew I’d never get it back,” Rick said, “but I refused to think of it as a gift, you know, because I didn’t want to give up on him. I couldn’t handle thinking about him being gone.”

That fall, Rick flew with Economus to the annual LINKUP conference, in Toronto, pushing Tom’s wheelchair through the airport and assisting him with bodily functions throughout the trip. As Economus’s health continued to decline, he was unable to fulfill his functions at the LINKUP office. No one suggested that he resign; nor did the core local members – a group of about thirty survivors – nominate or elect anyone to take Tom’s place. Bobbie and Jack’s weekly trips to the office turned into nightly trips to care for their dying friend. As Economus drifted progressively further from worrying about LINKUP’s day-to-day obligations, so too did the family that had been contributing most to the office’s operational success.

Marilyn Steffel would have been well suited to run the office, but she had just transitioned into a new phase of her career, working as a European consultant for a multinational corporation. Steffel’s relationship to Economus was characterized by a fervent but distant admiration. Following the archetype of the newly made American businesswoman, Steffel stayed focused on her own career. With that professional distance,

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427 Springer, Interview with the author, June 20, 2012.
she was perhaps better situated to cope with his passing. Economus died on March 23, 2002. Steffel hosted a wake for him the following day. In her eulogy, Steffel praised Economus’s pastoral care for victims, saying that he “more than anyone else” had listened to survivors over the prior decade. Although she made a nod to SNAP, Steffel likewise credited Tom as the voice of the Chicago survivor movement: “We can console ourselves that the message of LINKUP that Tom carried as leader for the past ten years has been heard, AND THERE IS NO TURNING BACK. Victims are more than ever before supported… THE VICTIM/SURVIVORS VOICE HAS GROWN STRONG.” In her closing paragraph, Steffel likened Economus to “the Nelson Mandela” of victims of sexual abuse.

Some LINKUP members perceived the death of their charismatic leader as an insurmountable obstacle. Marilyn Steffel and Nancy Briggs both immediately “expressed a desire to resign from the Board.” Economus’s death was even more devastating for the survivors who had cared for him, essentially full time, during the prior six months. Rick struggled with deep depression, and he cancelled most of the monthly survivors’ support meetings that summer. Jack and Bobbie could not bring themselves to work in the office. Months passed before the group elected a new national leader, and in that interim no one so much as entered the Chicago-based office. The answering machine exceeded its capacity. Calls from victims, supporters, and even journalists were not returned. Bills were

not paid. The utilities were disconnected. Had Economus died a year sooner, or even a year later, this set of events would likely have been less catastrophic for the organization. But Economus’s death had coincided with the emerging “crisis” in Boston; accordingly, the chaos after his death resulted in the beginning of a steady but gradual demise in LINKUP membership and funding.

II. Tremors of Boston, 2002 in the Windy City

Boston is neither the focus nor a sub-focus of my research. But it is, oddly, essential for understanding what has happened in Chicago since 2002. The Chicago survivor movement’s momentum has paralleled broader phases of the crisis in the United States. Although survivors often know firsthand of other victims in their own diocese, they still experience new revelations of abuse with much of the same intrigue and incredulity as other laypersons. Four landmark sets of revelations influenced the Chicago movement in profound ways: (i) the trial of Gilbert Gauthe, Louisiana, 1985; (ii) the case of James Porter, Massachusetts, 1992; (iii) accusations against Cardinal Bernardin, Chicago, 1993 (discussed in the previous chapter); and (iv) the ousting of Cardinal Bernard Law, Boston, 2002. For survivors and close observers of the crisis, the details of these events are taken for granted.

These four landmarks are pasts that are constantly living in the present. Like “Pearl Harbor” or “9/11,” they are named by their shorthand, and even by their abbreviated
shorthand. Often, survivors speak among themselves merely by mentioning the abuser, the state, or the year. “Porter.” “Louisiana.” “2002.” These alone signify an immense depth of spiritual and emotional work. And just like “Pearl Harbor,” they are remembered and kept alive through constant acts and speech acts, through perpetual (re)consecration. Within the survivor movement, the mere enunciation of say, “Boston” or “2002” does ideological work.

Thus far, scholars have used these shorthand conventions as well. I believe that is a grave error, although it is not one I am attempting to repair here. The details of each of these landmark national developments are crucial, and a thorough, monograph-length analysis of each event would be a most welcome addition to our literature. There are not enough pages in this chapter, perhaps even in this entire manuscript, to do justice to the complexity of each of these four landmarks, neither as experienced in their local contexts nor as experienced by survivors and laypersons across the globe. Yet fortunately, the deep history of the crisis in Chicago that we have already begun to examine can allow us to appreciate the force of each of these four events upon the momentum of the Chicago movement.

431 Just as one is more likely to hear “December 7” than “Naval Station Pearl Harbor.” Thanks to the considerable ideological work that has been done on such phrases, it would be perceived as bizarre, perhaps even disrespectful, for someone to say much more, such as, “There was an aerial attack by the Japanese Navy on the Naval Base Pearl Harbor, dock of the Middle Pacific Fleet, in Honolulu, Hawaii on December 7, 1941.” Likewise for “9/11,” which needs not year, not city, not state, not country, nor even continent. As experience, and as ideology, such hyper-truncated enunciations of events reflect the constructed nature of memory and collective identity.
Louisiana buoyed Jeanne Miller’s courage. Gauthe provided the context (and indeed text) of Miller’s correspondence with Andrew Greeley. And it was only because of 1985 that the NCCB commissioned “The Manual,” that Greeley was able to then procure a copy of that text, and that Greeley was able to put Miller in contact with its primary author, Thomas Doyle. The media interest in Louisiana contributed directly to Miller’s decision to write *Assault on Innocence*, and in turn it was Louisiana that made that book marketable to the U.S. talk show circuit. It is unimaginable, in the absence of 1985, to conceive of Oprah inviting Miller as a featured guest on her show. Likewise, it was literally in reading about Louisiana that Barbara Blaine reached out to Jason Berry who, in turn, subsequently promoted Blaine’s victims’ hotline when he appeared on talk shows. The fallout from Louisiana gave Miller and Blaine a national podium. It provided the context through which they came to recognize in their own narratives of abuse as endemic of a broader crisis. It gave the public the subsequent language of understanding the abuses as a crisis. And it gave SNAP and LINKUP their purpose. For the public – which at that point included all of the survivors who were not in Chicago – Louisiana was, in no exaggerated terms, the raison d’être for the establishment of the survivor movement. At least until 1992.

To break into the national media consciousness – which is to say, for a critical mass of news editors to recognize a development as a commodity – requires that a new

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432 I begin here by using all three variants of “Gilbert Gauthe, Louisiana, 1985.” But throughout, my default will be to use the location, in this case the state of Louisiana. For historical clarity, I try to avoid using only the year as shorthand. Most often, survivors speak only the name – “Gauthe,” “Law,” etc., and I am explicitly breaking from them in that emic pattern because in hindsight it is easy to recognize that, perversely, this habit among survivors has had the effect of making the criminals more recognizable than their victims.

433 To reiterate an important fact analyzed in the prior chapter, the original SNAP hotline (from 1985 to 1993) was literally the pre-existing telephone line at St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Worker.
“revelation” of abuse be at least as, and better yet more incredible than the last. Fall River, Massachusetts, May 8, 1992 met those requisites. On that evening, while being interviewed by a local Boston ABC News television team, James Porter admitted openly to abusing at least 100 children during his twenty years of priesthood. Within weeks, victims came forward from all eight of the parishes to which Porter had been assigned in Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Minnesota. For Chicago survivors, the timing was uncanny. Jeanne Miller had just begun to finalize the details of her conference. Barbara Blaine likewise profited, particularly because she successfully promoted her agenda at the “Breaking the Silence” conference, by enticing survivors to speak with lawyers she had handpicked, in private conference rooms she had rented at the Hilton without Miller’s invitation let alone knowledge. Those lawyers in turn solicited the victims to become new clients. Without Fall River, it is inconceivable that 300 survivors, let alone the more-than 70 journalists, would have attended “Breaking the Silence.” At the same time, it seems probable that without that heightened, post-Porter national media spotlight, Cardinal Bernardin would have honored his commitment to speak at the event.

As explained in the previous chapter, the subsequent accusations against Bernardin during the mid-1990s initiated a media frenzy in Chicago. This was also the moment for Blaine and Miller to set the discursive framework through which the national public would understand the crisis. But the two women responded to the scandalous accusations against Bernardin in dramatically divergent ways. Miller continued with her plan to step away

434 The resistance from LINKUP members was discussed in the last chapter; below, I say more about the limitations of the courts to provide healing to survivors.
from the survivor movement, and during that transition she was privately supportive of the Cardinal. In his transition to fill Miller’s shoes, Economus was careful and soft-spoken in commenting on the Bernardin allegations. Although he did not discredit Bernardin’s accusers, Economus turned the activism of LINKUP inward and continued to try to focus on cooperative dialogue with the clergy that might foster better treatment, and ultimately healing, for local survivors.

In sharp contrast to Economus’s soft-spoken approach, Blaine launched an aggressive, risky campaign to capitalize on Bernardin’s plight. Spurred by the financial backing of the irreverent Nina Polcyn and at the moral and legal urging of Patty Crowley and Judge Sheila Murphy, Blaine used the Bernardin scandal to launch her new brand, SNAP. She left her post at St. Elizabeth’s, moved out of the Catholic Worker House, and moved to an apartment on the north side. Polcyn paid Blaine’s rent. SNAP was formally filed, for the first time, as a 501(c)3, and over the following year, Blaine became a hot commodity for television and print journalists. Blaine called on Bernardin to step down during the investigation; he did not.

Blaine’s bold voice was, in retrospect, reckless. And SNAP paid the price. When, in the wake of Cook’s reconciliation Mass and the Cardinal’s death, the chill of the media survivor blacklist hit Chicago, it hit Blaine’s fledgling organization the hardest. In spite of its brief emergence on the national stage, SNAP was once again relegated to second-class

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435 As discussed in Chapter 3, prior to 1993, Blaine’s groups, called the “Victims’ Network,” existed solely as a loose network of AA-styled monthly support groups in Chicago and several other large cities, including Boston.
status within the survivor movement. From 1994 to 2002, SNAP served local survivors primarily through its monthly support-group meetings, which usually drew only 6 to 12 people. During this time, Blaine and David Clohessy held full-time jobs unrelated to SNAP and worked sporadically in their evenings to write press release statements and solicit survivors for SNAP fundraising drives. LINKUP, meanwhile, continued to attract a few hundred survivors to its annual conferences, had a dedicated office, and enjoyed consistent funding through the broad subscribership to its Missing Link newsletters.

After Boston, 2002, the Chicago survivor movement transformed into its current configuration. As the scandal developed in Boston, Blaine established SNAP meetings in one of Boston’s Catholic Worker houses, which enabled SNAP to recruit many of the emerging victims into its fold. Unlike SNAP, which had established a Boston chapter under Steve Lynch and also could leverage east coast volunteer Mark Serrano, LINKUP was not well organized in Boston. Instead, LINKUP had predicted that Los Angeles would be the next epicenter of the movement, and they had in 1998 established a small California office there. In spite of LINKUP’s physical absence, most news journalists turned first to the LINKUP Chicago office for commentary on the Boston scandal. The problem, for LINKUP, was that no one was in that office picking up the phone. Their charismatic leader for the past ten years, Rev. Tom Economus, had just died of bone cancer. The net effects of Boston, 2002 on the Chicago survivor movement are unmistakable: Boston ushered SNAP into the national and ultimately international spotlight; Economus’s death heralded the swift demise of LINKUP; and hundreds of new non-victims in Chicago – spurred by their recognition that the nation’s cardinals and bishops had been systematically covering-up
abuse cases for at least the past forty years – spawned the creation of dozens of new grassroots survivor organizations in Chicago, of which the Coalition of Concerned Catholics (CCC) alone remains today.

**Law’s Coronation of Barbara Blaine**

It was readily apparent to me as an outsider that the primary difference between LINKUP and SNAP was that LINKUP’s leadership had treated the crisis the way survivors said they had wanted the Church to respond. Miller and Economus always listened to survivors. They worried more about having enough time for victims than about having enough money to sustain their organization. Economus staged press conferences and protests, but they were often in dialogue with at least one diocesan priest and always in hopes of inspiring change **within** the Church. LINKUP conferences, particularly under Economus, had focused on “healing,” and when a survivor felt that returning to their former parish activities would be helpful for them, LINKUP’s leaders encouraged that victim to try to attend one of the archdiocesan “healing masses.” In short, Miller and Economus each embodied a pastoral charisma. Barbara Blaine, by contrast, responded to Boston, 2002 in much the same way as Cardinal Law responded to the allegations against him. Blaine organized massive public relations campaigns. She openly lamented her organization’s financial struggles. Blaine repeatedly appealed to her constituents to increase their monetary donations. She sought justice in the judicial system. More specifically, Blaine connected plaintiffs in her organization with the most aggressive attorneys they could afford. And with the same unambiguous moral authority of Law’s
public denial that he had any prior knowledge of the abusers he had shuffled from diocese to diocese, Blaine denounced all priests as either abusers or enablers.

Blaine’s leadership style was corporate and legalistic. Although she is personally reclusive, Blaine’s public persona is one of anger and indignation. Many survivors appreciate Blaine’s work on their behalf, but only a small fraction of the victims living in Chicago volunteer each year to support SNAP’s daily operations. Although never the grassroots movement that VOCAL was, Blaine has substantiated SNAP as the longest lasting, wealthiest, and most far reaching survivor organization in the world. Boston, 2002 provided the platform from which Blaine launched this multinational megalith.

To the extent that SNAP existed at all from 1993 to 2001, it was solely as a part-time nonprofit run by a loose network of professional volunteers based in a handful of urban areas in the Midwest and mid-Atlantic regions. Within Chicago, SNAP survivor meetings were infrequent, run first as a ministry out of Blaine’s St. Elizabeth’s Catholic Worker house and later out of the Quaker meetinghouse in the nearby neighborhood of Hyde Park. Prior to 2002, Blaine ran SNAP alongside other religious, educational, and professional endeavors. Although Polcyn’s funding had enabled Blaine to work full-time during the Bernardin scandal, the chilly media blacklisting of Blaine that followed forced her to close the SNAP office on the north side and to seek private employment. With Polcyn’s financial help and the encouragement of Judge Sheila Murphy, Blaine enrolled in the DePaul University School of Law. When she graduated in 1996, Blaine was offered a position in the public law offices of Judge Sheila Murphy’s husband, Patrick Racey-
Murphy, under whom she served the city in the Cook County Public Guardian’s Office. Most of Blaine’s assignments were in the Juvenile Division, which is tasked with representing minors who have been abused or neglected.

In the immediate wake of Boston, 2002, Blaine quit her job as a Public Guardian. Donations skyrocketed, spurred initially simply by the repeated mention of SNAP by Steve Lynch and other Boston survivors who had been regular attendees at the self-help groups Blaine had established in 1992 in two Catholic Worker houses in the South End in Boston. In 2001, SNAP had less than five hundred paying members; by the end of 2002 it claimed 2,000 members; by the end of fiscal year 2003, SNAP reported 6,000 supporters; and today it boasts more than 10,000 dues-paying members. These membership statistics provide additional evidence that it was Boston, 2002 that made possible Blaine’s formidable empire of victims, attorneys, and secular donors.

**New Groups and New Rifts: The Movement’s Struggle to Define Common Ground**

As LINKUP collapsed and SNAP rose, nearly a dozen new survivor-advocacy organizations were formed in Chicago. The short-lived but nevertheless meteoric, national rise of Voice of the Faithful had the most immediate effect on the landscape of the Chicago survivor movement. In my research on Boston, I discovered that the founders of Voice of the Faithful descended from a vein of the American Catholic counterculture similar to the one that produced Blaine and Steffel. But that research is beyond the scope of this monograph. To the public eye, however, it appeared that Voice of the Faithful was forged *ex nihilo* in the crucible of Boston, 2002. By 2003, the Wellesley, Massachusetts-based
nonprofit claimed to have more than 60,000 members nationwide. In Chicago alone, at least seven VOTF chapters were founded between May and October 2002.

Bobbie and Jack Sitterling helped co-found two of those VOTF charters. In June, still grieving Economus’s death, Bobbie insisted on representing LINKUP at the 2002 USCCB Conference in Dallas, Texas. Jack did not go with Bobbie – a rare absence that still stings her emotionally today. I asked Jack to talk to me about why he chose to stay home:

I just had no faith in the bishops anymore. There had been plenty of meetings like that that had flared up over the years and stuff, and I had been so involved, so heavily invested in those things, and then they all just eventually petered out. So I just felt like – huh, whatever, this might last a few months, and then they’ll cover it up again, and these promises will fade away. So I figured, why waste my time by going all the way down there? Little did I know that this time people – the public, mostly – weren’t going to just let it go. After Boston, they didn’t forget.437

In Jack’s absence, Bobbie’s daughter offered to accompany her to the conference. Although Bobbie is often reclusive, she and Stephanie felt invigorated by the enthusiasm of other survivors in Dallas. More than one hundred victims and advocates had crammed into the lobby of the Fairmont Hotel where the bishops were meeting. The Dallas Fire Marshall ordered them to evacuate the space, and then state troopers arrived and created a safety perimeter around the hotel, forcing the survivors to move their gathering across the street. According to Bobbie, SNAP director David Clohessy really shined that day:

David said, OK, fine, and then he led everyone peacefully across the street. We linked arms. We marched around the police perimeter. There were all kinds of news people. I guess that was my first public ‘press statement’ – this reporter asked

437 Sitterling, interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
what my name was, and even though I said, ‘I don’t want to say,’ but he apparently took my picture anyway. The next morning another LINKUP member called my hotel room and said, ‘Bobbie, there’s a picture of you in the Dallas Morning News.’ I said, ‘Really?’ She said, ‘Yeah! But the caption says ‘Unidentified Victim.’” After that, I didn’t want to just be some ‘unidentified’ survivor.\textsuperscript{438}

Bobbie’s timing in stepping out from the shadows corresponded with increasing empowerment felt by many survivors in the wake of Boston, 2002. In Dallas that summer, the USCCB adopted the “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,” which established, among other reforms that emboldened survivors, a lay “National Review Board” and recommendations for improving diocesan policies.

While she was in Dallas, Bobbie met Paul Baier, a Boston survivor who was handing out pamphlets about a new survivor conference he was organizing on behalf of his Wellesley-based group “Voice of the Faithful.” When she returned to Chicago, Bobbie enthusiastically invited Linda – the high school friend with whom she had sometimes been abused – to go to the founding VOTF conference. Sensing the shift in his wife’s optimism, Jack also volunteered to go with Bobbie. On July 20, 2002, Bobbie, Linda, and Jack joined more than 4,000 other Roman Catholic laypersons who crammed into Boston’s Hynes Convention Center. The event sent shockwaves through American news media and served as perhaps the first major warning to bishops that their Dallas Charter might not put an end to the public frenzy surrounding the abuse scandal. But the first VOTF conference also heralded significant divides within and among the emerging national survivor movement.

\textsuperscript{438} Sitterling, interview with the author, July 26, 2011.
Some victims were upset by what they saw and heard at the first VOTF conference, which left them feeling uncertain about the reality of their suffering for the majority of non-abused VOTF members and attendees. On paper, Baier had done so many things right. Baier had chosen the man most revered by the Chicago movement, Fr. Tom Doyle, to deliver the keynote address and to receive VOTF’s inaugural Priest of Integrity Award. Against the opinion of other VOTF organizers, Baier had also insisted on devoting speaking spots to SNAP victims, including Blaine, Clohessy, and Boston survivor Phil Saviano. In spite of these savvy organizational decisions by Baier, a core contingent of Boston victims decided to protest the VOTF conference, and roughly fifty of them picketed the entrance to the Hynes Center. Of all the victims who had been invited to speak, only local survivor Arthur Austin chose to confront the registered attendees with the reality of those who suffered outside. Privately, Austin had been encouraged by Blaine, who had helped him write the speech and who immediately preceded him in the speaking order that day. Austin’s comments are worth quoting here, particularly because the divide he so eloquently observed prefigured disagreements later that summer within the seven VOTF charters that were founded in Chicago:

I want to address the issue of the angry survivors outside who want nothing to do with you. For them quite legitimately, your splendid fancy conference is too little, too late, and too much about you. When it should always and urgently, and long since, have been about them. For them, this even is shadow-play, a thing without substance. And before you begin to grow indignant with me, let me ask you – how many of you took the time even to find out the name of one of those angry survivors? You have never walked one step, one moment, of their agonizing, lonely, and hellishly terrifying journey. You do not live in a catastrophic moment. You do not get to judge them; all you get is the right to beg this forgiveness. The time has come when Voice of the Faithful must make a choice between its desire
for merely public and churchly respectability or the extremely unmanageable, unpredictable, alarming radical grace of God in the world. There are 4,200 of you here today… and yet just one month ago, at the Solidarity Walk on Sunday, June 23, your presence was noticeable only by its invisibility. The presence of your absence was everywhere… In God’s name, I challenge you all, after the liturgy, to walk out of this convention hall with me, to the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, to stand in solidarity with each survivor and victim who trusts you enough to let you stand beside them.439

Blaine and Austin hoped that at least a dozen attendees would join them in the march. Instead, more than one thousand of the advocates inside of Hynes participated in the protest. Jack, Bobbie, and Linda found themselves near the front of the marchers, and Bobbie remembers the moment as “transcendent.”440 In spite of the joy she and other survivors felt that day, questions about the absence of survivors within the leadership of VOTF continued to plague the organization over the following years. In Boston, three of the original two dozen VOTF co-founders left the organization to found their own nonprofits. Paul Baier formed a short-lived group called “Survivors First,” and Terry McKiernan and Anne Barrett Doyle founded BishopAccountability.org, which remains today the largest public archive of documents related to priestly sexual abuse within the U.S.

In Chicago, the tensions between survivors and advocates emerged more gradually. When Bobbie returned home, she and Jack were among the founding members of three local VOTF charters, in Oak Park and River Forest. Five other VOTF charters were “officially” founded in autumn 2002 in the suburbs of Wilmette, Arlington Heights,

439 Austin’s speech, reprinted in Muller, Keep the Faith, Change the Church, 168 – 171.
440 Sitterling, interview with the author, July 26, 2011.
McHenry, Schaumburg, and South Chicago. All seven of these VOTF “charters” were officially sponsored by their respective host parishes (at least at first). Although all were survivors, few admitted to having had ever met a physical victim. The irony of the situation became increasingly clear to Bobbie. At the second Oak Park VOTF meeting, Margaret Field suggested that they invite a victim to speak for Jim Mueller’s upcoming visit to Chicago. “But,” the speaker lamented, “We don’t know any victims.” Bobbie stood up and said, “Yeah, you do. Me.” Once she identified herself as such, Bobbie became the token victim in her Oak Park and River Forest VOTF groups. At first, she didn’t mind the spotlight, “It was nice to be heard,” she said, “and looked up to.” In March 2003, more than 200 people attended a lecture Bobbie gave that Oak Park VOTF had advertised as its first “Victims Talk” event. During the weeks leading up to the event, Bobbie was consumed by anxiety and depression. Initially, she didn’t think she could go through with it. But Tom Doyle, via telephone from the U.S. Air Force base where he was stationed in Ramstein, Germany, eased Bobbie’s pain and helped her draft the speech. “Just tell the truth, you cannot go wrong telling your truth,” he told her. In spite of the great attendance at her event, the River Forest VOTF charter stopped meeting in 2004, and the Oak Park group shut its doors shortly after that. Although there were certainly other mitigating reasons, Bobbie speculates that it was “because I was the only survivor” openly

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441 An “official” VOTF charter denotes simply a VOTF group that registered their support, and contributed a portion of their local members’ dues to the finances of, the national VOTF 501(c)3 that was based in Boston. There were likely many other parishes in Chicago which held “VOTF” meetings in the wake of Boston, 2002, but only these seven registered in 2003 as “affiliate charters” with the national organization.

442 Sitterling, interview with the author, July 26, 2012.

443 Sitterling, interview with the author, July 26, 2012.
involved in either of those groups. Infused by the shockwave that was Boston, 2002, Jack and Bobbie also paid attention to other new developments within the Chicago survivor movement. In addition to being involved with these VOTF chapters, LINKUP, and SNAP, they also joined another new group that had just formed: the Coalition of Concerned Catholics.

**Crowley’s CTA and the Coalition of Concerned Catholics**

From the moment it morphed into a national organization, in 1998, Call to Action was, in print, a consistent supporter of LINKUP and SNAP. But CTA members rarely attended LINKUP events. And very few Chicago survivors are, or ever have been, dues-paying members of CTA. To the extent that the organizations have overlapped, it was primarily through Barbara Blaine and then, beginning in 2002, through the Coalition of Concerned Catholics. The history of CCC, which has not been previously documented either by scholars or by news media, is significant because it highlights a third, parallel genealogy through which Catholic Action came to shape the Chicago survivor movement.

In October, 2002, Bob Heineman was overwhelmed by the lack of interest within national CTA for supporting Boston victims and survivors. Heineman had first become involved in CTA during the 1980s, when he spearheaded the local “Catholics for Peace” initiative with Barbara Blaine, toured nationally with the organization’s “Performing Arts Ministry,” served on the Chicago CTA board of directors, and volunteered on behalf of CTA for six Church-sponsored humanitarian missions to Nicaragua. From 1998 to 2015,

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444 Sitterling, Interview with the author, July 26, 2012.
Heineman served as the CTA national director (the highest full-time position on the CTA staff). Discouraged by the lack of organizational support from within national CTA, Heineman turned to the local Chicago chapter, which was then comprised of about eleven very active members, including Robert McClory and Bernie “Bud” Henning, both of whom were among Patty Crowley’s dearest friends. McClory, who authored Patty’s biography of her role within the Papal Birth Control Commission, was sympathetic, but chose to devote most of his energy to other CTA issues. Henning, on the other hand, not only shared Heinemann’s concern but also brought significant organizational experience of his own.

After Henning graduated in theology from the Benedictine St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, in 1961, he moved back to Chicago and completed a J.D. at John Marshall Law School. Much to the disappointment of his father, who ran a small law practice in Chicago, Bud harnessed his new credentials to fill a recent vacancy as the head of the College Young Christian Students, which was headquartered in Chicago. Henning considered becoming a priest, and started being mentored by the YCS chaplain, Msgr. Reynold Hillenbrand. Patty Crowley approached Henning and asked him if he would like to be the official YCS/YCW representative at the final session of the Second Vatican Council. He accepted, and one of Crowley’s friends donated all of the funding for Henning’s six-month stay in Rome.445 Henning returned to the U.S. invigorated, and he began touring the country giving speeches to YCS campuses and Christian Family

445 The donor was Fr. John J. Hill, who told Henning the funds came directly from his royalties on A Modern Catechism (Chapman, 1964) which he had just published with co-author Rev. Theodore C. Stone.
Movement cells about “the vision of Vatican II.” In 1970, Henning stepped away from YCS and CFM, entered private practice, and started a family. When Crowley revamped the Chicago CFM community by launching Call to Action, Henning felt inspired to return to the movement, and he began working with Heineman on local CTA events. Drawing on his passion for liturgical reform, Henning gradually became a member of Heineman’s morning men’s prayer group and became a regular at the local Call to Action intentional Eucharistic community. The CTA intentional community moved each week between members’ homes and baked their own fresh loaves of wheat bread.\textsuperscript{446} The group’s liturgical celebrations generally lasted 2.5 to 3 hours each week, and their default celebrant was Margaret Field.

During his time with Chicago CTA, Henning had heard about the sexual abuse scandal from the most prominent leaders of the local movement. The local CTA IEC had invited Tom Economus in 1999, and Barbara Blaine in 2000; Although Henning had listened compassionately, neither speaker led him to action. “Something changed,” said Henning, after Boston. Prior to 2002, says Henning, he was “just a follower” of abuse revelations; the scandal in Boston made him “feel like it was time to lead.”\textsuperscript{447} Field mentioned her Oak Park VOTF group to the IEC, but many members – including Henning and Heineman – lacked the time or energy to commute regularly to Oak Park. After attending just one VOTF meeting, they decided to start a discussion group about the abuse scandal at their home parish, St. Nicholas in Evanston.

\textsuperscript{446} Henning, Interview with the author, December 2, 2013.
\textsuperscript{447} Henning, Interview with the author, December 2, 2013.
In December, 2002, with St. Nicholas as their initial home base, Henning, Heineman, and Field began bringing together a group of friends to talk about the crisis of sexual abuse. The small community – usually just 10 to 20 people – began organizing outreach events at other local parishes, with an unfocused dual agenda of educating Chicagoans about the problem and inquiring to see if there were ways they might support any new victims coming forward in Chicago. Although they were warmly received at some parishes, the group from St. Nicholas neither met the “new” victims they anticipated, nor did they gain many additional members. Only a few months after its inception, the group at St. Nick’s was losing momentum and experienced attrition from its original core. Henning and Heineman were on the verge of giving up when, in April 2003, Field invited them to a meeting she had heard about, organized by a similarly vague but ambitious group that had been meeting each week in the basement of St. Thomas Becket parish, in Mt. Prospect. The special event was called “The Journey to Integrity,” and it had been organized by the parish’s sole deacon, Tony Janotta, and his wife, Doreen. Members of the Arlington Heights and Wilmette VOTF chapters were in attendance, as were Jack and Bobbie Sitterling.

Henning remembers the Janottas’ presentation vividly. “Tony and Doreen had made pamphlets, worksheets, flow charts, posters – it was all very impressive,” he said. But it was what happened next that seared the moment into Henning’s memory. After Deacon Janotta finished, St. Thomas Becket’s pastor, Fr. Roller, attempted to give his own presentation. Roller’s defensive tone infuriated the Sitterlings. Apparently unable to hold it

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448 Henning, Interview with the author, December 2, 2013.
in, Jack coughed “BULL SHIT” about five minutes into Roller’s prepared remarks. Urged on by this adolescent show of support from her husband, Bobbie stood up and confronted the room. Although she was not very eloquent, Bobbie’s passionate and combatant remarks were made in the same vein as the manifesto she’d heard Austin give nine months earlier in Boston. When I asked Bobbie about her version, she replied,

Yeah, well I just told the room I knew exactly what he [Fr. Roller] was going to say next. He was going to say this, and then he was going to say that. And he [Fr. Roller] just looked dumfounded at me. And then I said that I knew the diocese didn’t really care about survivors, and everything he was saying was lies. He was telling lies, and I just couldn’t stand it. In that room where no one else was a survivor, I had to tell them what it was really like.449

By multiple accounts, Bobbie’s testimony – her living witness to the pain she and other survivors felt – was a watershed moment. About half of the 70 attendees were upset or disappointed in Bobbie’s tone, and they left fairly quickly. Fr. Roller left as well. The 25 to 30 people who were left asked Bobbie a few engaging questions, but within fifteen minutes most of them had left as well. Eventually, in addition to the Sitterlings, Henning, Field, and Heineman, Rick Springer, two women from St. Nicholas and three leaders from the Arlington Heights VOTF chapter remained in the room. Recognizing that they were a like-minded minority from a smattering of parishes, the small group decided to meet again. They set a time for the following week, and agreed to meet at Tony and Doreen’s apartment building in downtown Arlington Heights.

Over the following months, the Coalition of Concerned Catholics was officially formed as its own 501(c)3 out of this bricolage of passionate advocates from the Oak Park

449 Sitterling, interview with the author, August 9, 2012.
VOTF, “Chicagoland” VOTF (Arlington Heights), and the local Call to Action discussion group. For survivors in the area, CCC became “the final piece of the puzzle,” says Springer, in the monthly rhythm of local survivor meetings. Springer’s LINKUP self-help group always met on the first Monday of each month, and Blaine’s SNAP meetings were generally on the second Tuesday of each month; C-VOTF had been meeting on the third Monday of each month, and CCC took the fourth Monday. By highlighting this Monday-night scheduling rhythm, I am not implying that there was only enough room in the schedule for four groups. Rather, I am highlighting the extent to which Sitterling, Springer, and other LINKUP survivors were given preferential treatment by the non-victims leading these new organizations. By harnessing the credentials of these local LINKUP leaders, the groups from Call to Action and Journey to Integrity, as well as the other parishioners from Holy Family, St. Nick’s, and St. James parishes, were able to gain a more legitimate foothold within the fast-shifting terrain of the local Chicago survivor movement. From 2003 to 2005, eleven local members of LINKUP joined either (and frequently both) CCC and C-VOTF. When LINKUP finally collapsed, in 2005, Springer, Sitterling, and a core contingent of their fellow LINKUP survivors began pouring all of their energy into these two new groups.
The purpose of my third trip to Shawn’s house was to borrow some materials from her personal archive. “I’ll get these back next week, right?” she asked me repeatedly. In spite of my best efforts to reassure Shawn that her survivor materials would be protected and returned, the thought of letting me walk out the door with these treasured papers seemed almost too much for her. As she retrieved the thirteen file boxes from her closet, Shawn shook nervously from side to side, biting her fingernails in between each trip. Then she hesitantly sat down on the edge of a chair, carefully opening each box and inspecting its contents page by page. Meanwhile, Jim patiently rubbed Shawn’s shoulders and told little jokes in an apparent effort to ease his wife’s distress. Shawn asked me to pay close attention as she flipped through the documents, one by one. I followed her instructions, writing an inventory of each item as she removed it from a file box. Seven hours later, she sent her husband to make photocopies of this inventory, and waited for him to return before allowing me out the front door. I left with three suitcases that contained the archival documents that I had expressed interest in, all of them, that is, except for a three-inch thick manila folder with the name “Tom” sharpied across the exterior.

A pseudonym.
When Shawn first pulled the “Tom” folder out of the file box, I had assumed that it contained Shawn’s cherished memories of Tom Economus. As readers will recall, Economus had been the second charismatic leader of LINKUP, and Shawn and Jim had forged an incomparably close friendship with Tom before his untimely death. I recalled the numerous times during our prior conversations where Shawn had told (and retold) me about her cherished memories of how she and Jim and their teenaged daughter used to brave the long commute to Economus’s downtown apartment each week to help Tom stuff envelopes and prepare the Missing Link newsletter. But then I remembered that Shawn and I had already gone through an entire box of Economus materials, and that she had unflinchingly volunteered to let me borrow that prior box. So what on earth was in this three-inch folder?

As it turned out, this large manila folder contained Shawn’s correspondence with a different Tom: Thomas P. Doyle, O.P., J.C.D., the man widely regarded by survivors as the movement’s first whistleblower. Although Shawn and Doyle were on close terms – they had met in person many times and still corresponded regularly via telephone and e-mail – Shawn nevertheless spoke of Doyle as if he were superhuman. Whereas Economus had been her friend, she said, Doyle was everyone’s friend. Whereas Economus was a heroic survivor who had died tragically, Doyle was a priest who had not been abused and, therefore, had made the larger sacrifice by speaking out on behalf of survivors.

Clutching the “Tom” folder to her chest, Shawn informed me that I could not take her Doyle correspondence home with me. When I asked if I could at least examine the contents, tears began to run down her cheeks as Shawn whispered, “Oh, I don’t know, I
don’t know. Not these. Not this.” Eventually Jim persuaded his wife to let me peruse the folder. To my surprise, nothing stood out in the Doyle materials. Rather, the “Tom” folder contained mostly personal e-mail correspondence between Doyle and Shawn, e-mails that meant so much to Shawn that she had printed them off, sometimes in triplicate, to ensure that she would never lose them. The e-mails were comprised, almost entirely, of shared stories about their family vacations, updates on Chicago survivors, notes that Doyle had taken on his favorite books and, most recently, digital photographs of Jim and Shawn’s toddler-aged granddaughter, playing happily on a bike in their driveway and enjoying a trip to the playground. While I had been looking through the folder, Shawn had calmed herself considerably. She kindly brought a cup of tea and sat down next to me, smiling and laughing as she read aloud from some of her favorite documents in the folder. I worked up the courage to ask, “Shawn, forgive me for not understanding, but why do these e-mails mean so much to you?” “I don’t know,” she confessed in an embarrassed tone as water began to collect again in the corners of her eyes. “He just… he just… he has sacrificed so much for all of us. He means so much to us. He has done so much for survivors. He is our saint.”

Over the course of my fieldwork, nine members of the Chicago community described Doyle as a “martyr” or a “saint.” Indeed, while Doyle is perhaps the most widely valorized “saint” within the survivor movement, a number of other survivor advocates are likewise venerated by the Chicago movement, including Richard A.W. Sipe, Fr. Andrew Greeley, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Robert McClory, Illinois Supreme Court

Justice Anne Burke, Fr. Donald Cozzens, and Bishop Geoffrey Robinson. With the exception of Burke, all of these individuals are, or were at one time, Roman Catholic priests. In spite of their robust and intimate imagining of these men as saints, my field subjects would probably not recognize the category “survivors’ saints,” nor do Chicago survivors have any plans to petition the Vatican for Sipe’s or Doyle’s canonization into the official communio sanctorum. In other words, while multiple survivors casually spoke of these men as “saints,” the term “survivors’ saints” is a taxon of my own making, a second-order theoretical construct which, to paraphrase J.Z. Smith, is my “creation” and exists “solely within the spaces of my mind.”

I have created the concept of survivors’ saints because it provides crucial insight into some of the most vexing paradoxes of the survivor movement. Given their vilification of bishops, why do survivors still adore certain priests? Why has the issue of clerical celibacy, rather than sexual abuse, become the focal point of the reform agenda Chicago survivors seek? Founded, nurtured, and sustained by women, why is the survivor movement nevertheless so patriarchal in leadership, structure, and sainthood? Above all, analyzing the people most revered and worshiped by survivors further advances the broader questions that have guided every chapter within this dissertation: How has the pain and suffering of survivors been put to work in creating a broader lay movement calling for ecclesiastic reforms? And how has this reimagining of survivors’ collective suffering created a politics of identity that challenges broader U.S. Catholic memories about the postconciliar era? In attending to these questions, I

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demonstrate that neither patronage nor friendship (the predominant models for understanding sainthood) captures precisely the relationship between survivors and their saints.

The chapter focuses on the two people most glorified within the Chicago survivor movement, Thomas Doyle and A.W. Richard Sipe. My argument, in sum, is that survivors’ saints provide insight into the means by which survivors have harnessed their own suffering to create the collective narrative of a usable past. I will not attempt to discern the moods and motivations (psychological, economic, or otherwise) that might have animated these now-sanctified authors. I likewise refrain from over-scrutinizing the autobiographical information provided by Sipe and Doyle. Rather, this chapter is a historical and theoretical examination of the discursive archive of the Chicago sexual abuse survivor movement. These include private letters and survivor correspondence that we should treat as historical archives. I am also intending the term “archive” in the discursive, poststructuralist sense of that term. Rather than merely summarizing the hagiographies that survivors have constructed around Holy Tom and Saint Richard, this chapter contextualizes that mythical construction within a critical reading of those priests’ public writings and speeches.\footnote{The “archive,” Michel Foucault theorized, was the realm of the words and ideas and emotions that are \textit{possible} to say – the entirety of what is culturally \textit{imaginable}, if you will – including both that which is permissible and impermissible to utter. Foucault was hardly the only theorist to think critically about the emotional and linguistic boundaries that constrain a given cultural discourse. The Foucauldian “archive” is virtually identical to Pierre Bourdieu’s theorization of “doxa” as everything that \textit{can be said}, including both orthodox and heterodox religious rituals and beliefs. The key for both Foucault and Bourdieu is that discourse is always socially and historically constrained, even as it is caught up in the dynamic flux of a given community. Thus there are things that \textit{might} be said which are outside of that which is historically \textit{conceivable} to say.}
Before proceeding with my analysis, three short notes of caution are in order. First, all of the men I have termed survivors’ saints are, as of this writing, still alive. My very categorization of the living as saints, in other words, refutes the premise that underlies our most cherished definitions of sainthood, which explicitly constrain the theological category to holy figures who have already died. In his classic study of the phenomenology of religion, Gerard van der Leeuw declared, “The world has no use for living saints: they are dead persons or, still better, the potency of the dead.” For Peter Brown, “[Sainthood] is about the joining of Heaven and Earth, and the role, in this joining, of dead human beings.” My argument is that survivors’ saints repair this “joining of heaven and earth,” not by dying, but through their heroic, lived bearing of witness to the sexual abuse that survivors have endured.

This brings me to the second caution: a number of prominent Roman Catholic theologians have recently argued that the act of naming living persons as saints is spiritually desirable; perhaps it is even inspired by the spirit of Vatican II. Within this framework, several of the interlocutors I have chosen for this chapter, including Elizabeth Johnson, Lawrence Cunningham, and David Tracy, have identified the rise of living saints as a distinctly late twentieth-century cultural phenomenon. This is a compelling historical observation. These authors’ use of the taxon living saint is more constructive than

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456 Elizabeth Castelli, Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 4. Here it is also worth noting that many of the men and women who posthumously became recognized as “official” saints actively sought to constrain others’ perceptions by carefully crafting and controlling their public personas while they were alive.
analytical. Johnson, Cunningham, and Tracy are also invested in the normative effort to expand the modern category of sainthood to include more contemporary, diverse, unofficial, and living exemplars. Whereas Johnson and Tracy argue explicitly that contemporary Catholicism should expand sainthood to include more living saints (and some of my field subjects are persuaded by that theological move), I am interested in how the survivor movement does have living saints.

Here I appropriate the meaning my subjects give to sainthood, recognizing that it is informed by the Roman Catholic tradition but that it also has implications and meanings that exceed the bounds of official Roman Catholic canonization. Saints are created “from below,” even if they are only officially recorded as such from above. Lawrence Cunningham notes, “although the papacy claimed jurisdiction over all canonizations and the authentication of saints’ relics in the thirteenth century, only about ten percent of the saints venerated in the Western church were those who had been raised to the altar by papal decree.” In addition, saints are one of the means by which religious communities demarcate the boundaries between themselves and other religious groups, between their political goals and rival theological interpretations. In their construction of saints, the survivor movement displays its ideal values of community and authority, imagining an ecclesiological model deeply indebted to a personalist ethos. Through their deeds, Sipe and Doyle embody the concern for marginalized people (in their case survivors), articulate

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staunch critiques of hypocritical clerical power, and seek a more democratic and lay-involved Church.

Members of the survivor movement are not only aware of, but also deeply value, the way that Sipe and Doyle have harnessed survivors’ pain and suffering toward the ideological work of advocating for broader ecclesiastical reforms. Many survivors continue to desire the leadership of, and their vulnerability in the shadow of, priests. As I argued in the previous chapter, survivors express an ongoing need for intimate relationships with priests and a desire for approval and space within the church, even as they offer strong critiques of the hierarchy. Doyle and Sipe exemplify the type of relationship that survivors want to have with priests, and they figure centrally into how survivors imagine the future of the Church. Moreover, in uplifting these men as living saints, Chicago survivors have refashioned their own politics of identity, effectively creating a counter-politics and a counter-memory (to use Foucault’s terminology). This counter-memory, to which these saints stand as survivors’ chief witnesses, has built upon and expanded from a broader subversive discourse among postconciliar Catholic laypersons in the U.S.

**Saint Tom, Patron Friend of Whistleblowers**

Thomas Patrick Doyle, O.P., J.C.D., C.A.D.C., is adored by Chicago survivors as the first whistleblower of the clergy sexual abuse crisis, a devotion that stems from his authorship of a document in 1985 that many Chicago survivors refer to simply as “The Manual.” Doyle was raised in a large Irish Catholic family. His father’s career in the agrichemical industry had brought the family to the Midwest. In 1965, Doyle entered the
Chicago novitiate of the Order of Preachers (a.k.a. the Dominicans) and received his B.A. from the Aquinas Institute of Theology.\textsuperscript{459} Over the following decade, Doyle completed seven post-secondary degrees in Chicago, Milwaukee, Ontario, and Washington D.C., culminating in a Pontifical Doctorate in Canon Law at the Catholic University of America in 1978.\textsuperscript{460} After receiving his J.C.D., Doyle returned to Chicago to work in Cardinal John Cody’s office, where he oversaw the archdiocesan procedures for marriages and annulments.\textsuperscript{461}

In December, 1981, Doyle was chosen by the Vatican ambassador to the United States, Cardinal Pio Laghi, to serve as the secretary canonist of the Apostolic Delegation in Washington, D.C. (now called the Apostolic Nunciature). Politically, Doyle was seen as a conservative choice; he was adamantly pro-Reagan and an active member of his local chapter of the National Rifle Association.\textsuperscript{462} Among other duties, Laghi charged Doyle with compiling the recommendations for two of John Paul II’s key apostolic appointments, Bernard F. Law as Archbishop of Boston and John O’Connor as Archbishop of New York.\textsuperscript{463} Laghi also counted on Doyle for legal advice and delegated questions of insurance and liability to Doyle’s desk. In 1984, a series of pending lawsuits in the diocese of Lafayette, Louisiana became a concern for Laghi when one of the plaintiffs’ attorneys, Minos Simon, sent the nuncio a summons that named John Paul II as a defendant.

\textsuperscript{459} Berry, \textit{Lead Us Not into Temptation}, 87.
\textsuperscript{460} Doyle, Affidavit in Davenport Case, Dated May 24, 2004.
\textsuperscript{462} Fieldnotes, Doyle’s speech, 2012 SNAP conference.
\textsuperscript{463} Berry, \textit{Lead Us Not into Temptation}, 87 – 88.
The lawsuits in Lafayette stemmed from a growing number of accusations that Fr. Gilbert Gauthe had sexually abused children in the diocese. The broader narrative of Gauthe’s crimes has been thoroughly documented, so here I focus on Doyle’s role in the Gauthe affair. Laghi tasked Doyle with monitoring the legal filings in the pending suits against Gauthe. Doyle began to work closely with F. Ray Mouton Jr., a civil attorney who had been retained to defend the diocese of Lafayette in the proceedings. According to Doyle, Mouton was concerned that the diocese’s efforts to cover up allegations against other Lafayette priests threatened to make the legal and financial ramifications much worse for the Church. Doyle then arranged a meeting in Washington D.C. between Mouton and his close personal friend, Fr. Michael R. Peterson, M.D, director of the Saint Luke Institute, a psychiatric facility in Suitland, Maryland, which Peterson had founded in 1981 to offer discreet but compassionate treatment to Roman Catholic priests who suffered from drug or alcohol dependencies. Through his friendship with Peterson, Doyle knew that an increasing number of priests were being referred to St. Luke’s for rehabilitation after their bishops had received complaints or allegations related to the sexual abuse of minors.

Through the course of their collaboration on the Gauthe case, Doyle, Mouton, and Peterson became increasingly worried about the financial liability that other U.S. dioceses might face if the sexual abuse trends in Lafayette and Washington D.C. were as systemic as they feared. Without an official commission or financial support from the Church, the three men took it upon themselves to outline the problem and suggest how bishops could best utilize cannon law to limit their secular liability. The men dedicated the next four

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months to the effort, producing a 92-page thesis that survivors recognize as “prophetic.”


Some extremely serious issues have arisen which presently place the Church in the posture of facing extremely serious financial consequences as well as significant injury to its image… The Criminal Considerations, Civil Considerations, Canonical Considerations, and Clinical Considerations are of such magnitude, not to mention the other substantial considerations such as Insurance and Public Relations, that it was decided that the presentation of these extraordinary issues necessitated an extraordinary response, a response which would affirmatively and aggressively attack the problem. This is a very new and narrow area of legal jurisprudence which is developing with a very adverse effect upon the Church’s interests.465

As this excerpt suggests, Doyle, Mouton, and Peterson were concerned primarily with limiting the Church’s public image and financial liability. The document expressed no concern for childhood victims or their families and only tangentially explored what it called “Selected Spiritual Concerns.”

Alongside liability, the manual emphasized the need for secrecy, beginning with the first sentence, “The necessity for protecting the confidentiality of this document cannot be overemphasized.”466 The manual did not mention or name any specific instances of clergy sexual abuse “so that the reader may not be placed in a position of having received any specific knowledge not generally known to the public and thereby become the target of

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a subpoena or other discovery device.” Alluding to the use of secret archives as provided for canonically, the authors requested that each reader afford the document every "protection and privilege provided under our law.” But Doyle and Peterson went even further, requesting “that each reader return the document to the person from whom they received same, without copying.” In justifying this precaution, the authors cited the growing interest of “the national press” as the threat necessitating this extreme level of secrecy. They asserted that the issue of “clergy pedophilia” would become the defining news media focus “for at least the balance of the decade (having replaced the sexual issue of the seventies, homosexuality).” Doyle, Peterson, and Mouton warned the bishops of an increasingly anti-institutional news media, characterized by its “tendency to attack institutions held in high esteem,” of which the “great wealth” of the Catholic Church made it the paramount target for allegations of “hypocrisy” and “scandal.”

Having iterated the need for secrecy, the authors turned their emphasis to the massive amount of money at stake. Doyle and Mouton estimated that the lowest “total projected losses for the decade” would be $1 billion, with the upper range of U.S. dioceses’ liability approaching $10 billion. Accordingly, the authors described civil attorneys as enemies of the faith, predicting that attorneys would labor “to embroil the whole structure in the controversy and conduct discovery in each and every Diocese in this

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country to discover all damaging information.” 471 The authors also imagined the news media as an imminent threat; they identified by name three national media companies that they perceived as “trying to tie the isolated, regional episodes into a national story, one of presumably of scandalous proportions.” 472 Although civil attorneys were to be feared, the authors applauded church counsel, specifically “our Diocesan attorneys in Chicago,” for their “ongoing effort” to devise a counterstrategy that might protect the Church. 473 It is a new “age of litigation,” the authors warned, in which the jurisprudence related to “clergy malpractice” is still up for grabs. 474

Doyle and Mouton identified the key juridical issues for which clear precedents had yet to be established. Doyle has uplifted this section, in retrospect, as a prophetic road map to the past thirty years of thorny litigation battles between Church attorneys and secular courts. The Church has a different understanding of the age at which a child is considered to be an adult, so might that mean that these were not actually children who were abused? Are diocesan memos protected from legal discovery by religious privilege? Are a bishop’s confidential pastoral files diplomatically exempt from subpoena or grand jury investigation? Would the Church’s extensive insurance policies for “sexual conduct between the Priest and child” cover most of the financial liability? Would the bishops who had already mishandled pedophile allegations compromise the credibility of other bishops in court? In terms of assessing when to settle an allegation before the child’s family files a

lawsuit, how much money, concretely, is the Church’s reputation worth? (And how ought the number of other children a given priest may have molested figure into that calculus?) Does the criminal liability for an abusive priest extend beyond “the Corporate Entity, i.e. the Diocese” to hierarchical superiors, including the “National Bishops’ Conference” and potentially as high as “the Holy Father and the Holy See?”475

In the final section of the manual, which outlined the clinical and medical questions raised by the crisis, the authors maintained their concern for the Church’s legal and financial liability. They asked, for example, whether medical providers retained by a diocese were obliged under state or national law to report the child abuse to law enforcement476 Again, potential avenues for limiting liability were at the forefront of the authors’ minds. “What constitutes sexual abuse?” they asked, “Does touching the buttocks?... Does touching the genitalia?... Does masturbation of the child by the Priest of or the Priest by the child constitute sexual abuse?”477 Similarly, if a juvenile “appeared to initiate the sexual contact or seemed to continue to enjoy it over a period of time,” then was it still abuse?478 The broadest “medical” question that the authors asked in this section was simply, “#22. What are the causes of sexual abuse by Roman Catholic Clergy?”479 The question itself demonstrates that Doyle recognized the scope and severity of the crisis several years before he spoke out publically.

While Doyle has reiterated that the manual was never officially commissioned, he has been equally at pains to emphasize that the three authors received generous feedback and support from a number of key bishops during the four months that they worked on the document. Chief among Doyle’s supporters was, as we would expect, his immediate supervisor: “The nature of the entire proposal was presented to Archbishop Pio Laghi. Indeed, I had been briefing him on it on a daily basis.”


Doyle, who had known Cardinal Law for nearly two decades, said that “Bernie” was so moved by the process that he vowed to take the manual to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Research and Pastoral Practices (which Law chaired) with the goal of creating a special NCCB committee on clergy molestation of children.

In a 2002 deposition, Law confirmed that he and Doyle had been in close contact during the drafting of “The Problem of Sexual Molestation.” Although it is unclear [that or whether] Law ever presented the manual to his committee, the document was discussed at the June 1985 NCCB meeting in Collegeville, Minnesota at a special executive session chaired by then-NCCB president Bishop James Malone. The session resolved to create an executive committee under the

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leadership of Bishop Joseph Murphy; however, for reasons that remain unclear, no such committee was formally constituted by the NCCB until 1993.\footnote{O’Reilly and Chalmers, \textit{The Clergy Sex Abuse Crisis and the Legal Responses}. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 241 – 245.}

Six months after the Collegeville meeting, in December 1985, Doyle and Peterson were frustrated to learn that that NCCB had not adopted any of their recommendations, so they used the St. Luke Institute mailroom to send a copy of their manual to every diocesan bishop in the United States.\footnote{Doyle, “A Short History of ‘The Manual.’”} The following summer, in August 1986, the authors again followed up with each bishop by sending a set of revisions that were intended to further expedite the removal of an accused priest under the procedures of cannon law. It reads,

\begin{quote}
The canons provide for a kind of “administrative leave” (cannon 1722), whereby the priest or deacon may be asked to leave his residence and cease all public ministerial functions. This type of action by the bishop is not only advisable but should be routine. AT THIS POINT THE PRIEST OR DEACON SHOULD NOT BE SUSPENDED. Suspension is a canonical penalty which leads to a presumption of guilt. This could be misconstrued in civil courts and used to the disadvantage of the church… A perpetual or indefinite suspension can be imposed only after a canonical trial.\footnote{Correspondence signed by Peterson on St. Luke’s letterhead, filed in Curia of Dallas archives, dated 27 Aug. 1986.}
\end{quote}

In both this and other passages, the letter argues that bishops should not use the most punitive measures available under canon law, which was in part to ensure expediency and in part to avoid any presumption should a given case reach civil or criminal court. The authors’ concern for limiting a diocese’s liability also gave rise to their most adamant recommendation:
It is imperative to clearly understand that transfer or removal isolated from any other action is far from adequate and could in fact lead to a presumption of irresponsibility or even liability of the diocesan authorities by civil courts. In short, those presumed to be guilty of sexual misconduct, especially if it involves child molestation, must never be transferred to another parish or post as the isolated remedy for the situation.\footnote{Correspondence signed by Peterson on St. Luke’s letterhead, filed in Curia of Dallas archives, dated 27 Aug. 1986.}

In award ceremonies recognizing Doyle’s accomplishments, SNAP and VOTF leaders have upheld this passage as an act of prophetic valor. As the John Jay Studies have confirmed, however, the practice of transferring pedophile priests had peaked more than a decade prior to this recommendation. Read in that light, we might reasonably suspect that Doyle, Mouton, and Peterson were not proscribing a hypothetical scenario; rather, these men were appalled by the degree to which the longstanding \textit{de facto} policy of transferring priests had exposed the Church to a potentially enormous amount of financial and juridical liability. Even as the document appears to confirm Doyle’s complicity in protecting Church finances, the survivor organizations interpreted this recommendation as proof of Doyle’s status as a whistleblower and willingness to speak the truth to the hierarchy.

Despite the co-authorship of “The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy,” survivors remember it solely as “Doyle’s manual” or simply “the manual.” This collective amnesia among survivors is due in part to the fact that Doyle was the only one of the signatories who later became involved in the Chicago survivor movement. Most importantly, survivors do not see Doyle’s interest in protecting the Church’s liability over public safety as problematic. Rather, they view the manual as
evidence of Doyle’s recognition of the magnitude and scope of the crisis and his role as an internal whistleblower willing to tell the hierarchy uncomfortable and damaging truths about the ways that they had handled perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Survivor narratives subordinate Doyle’s initial complicity in protecting the Church’s financial and legal liabilities to his later dedication to the survivor movement.

Following the publication of the manual, Doyle found himself at odds with colleagues in Italy. He recounted to Berry that he was never formally fired, but rather in 1986, a colleague asked when he would vacate his office, an inquiry that was then followed by Laghi’s invitation for a dinner to honor his time at the Vatican Nuncio. By his own telling, Doyle became despondent at the demise of his promising career and angry at the extent to which the Church was ignoring rampant abuse. Instead of returning to work for the Dominicans, Doyle entered the U.S Air Force as a military chaplain.\textsuperscript{488} In subsequent years, he began fielding survivors’ telephone calls, which grew in number as word of Doyle’s support spread throughout survivor circles. Doyle offered the precious words of an apology that so many other clergy had previously withheld. Doyle apologized not only for child sexual abuse, but also more broadly for what he termed ambiguously the “sins” of the Church in processing survivor claims.\textsuperscript{489} As we have seen, many survivors yearn for such intimate contact, in which the roles of confession are inverted, with the priest(s) or bishops abused or silenced them. To the survivors who called him in Germany, Doyle offered a priests’ confession of the Church’s sins.

\textsuperscript{488} Berry, \textit{Vows of Silence}, 54-56.
\textsuperscript{489} Berry, \textit{Vows of Silence}, 59-60.
For survivors, Doyle’s subsequent public roles cemented his status as a priest who recognized the moral failings of the Church and stood with marginalized and betrayed survivors. In addition to communicating with survivors, Doyle became that “canon lawyer” for the prosecution that he had imagined. To date, Doyle has volunteered as an expert witness on behalf of survivors in more than 400 civil trials in the United States. He first testified at the request of Jeff Anderson, who had filed lawsuits on behalf of victims of Tom Adamson. His expert testimony and the manual, which he provided to Anderson, won the survivors about half a million dollars each. This success led to similar requests across the country, as well as numerous press appearances. He began appearing at survivor conferences and events, reaching larger numbers of victims and encouraging them to take legal action. As compensation for his testimony rolled in, Doyle donated the funds to survivors for whom the statutes of limitations had expired. By 2000, he had given over $100,000 to survivors.

The Manual as Relic, Not Manifesto

Although Chicago survivors frequently talked about “Doyle’s” manual, they never quoted from it directly or consulted a specific section of the manual during their monthly meetings. But every survivor and survivor advocate that I interviewed knew exactly where they kept their copy of the document. Although initially bishops carefully guarded the manual from the public eye, Barbara Blaine disseminated printed copies and excerpts to survivors at the 1992 Linkup conference, a year prior to the founding of SNAP. She used
the manual to promote Doyle as a priest who was also a survivor advocate, renting separate rooms for survivors to meet with Doyle as well as lawyers. At the conference, Doyle and Sipe did not appear in clerical garb and received enormous applause. By contrast, Andrew Greeley, who wore clerical collar, elicited boos from the audience. The manual represented Doyle’s privileged access and participation in the inner workings of the hierarchy and his status as an insider-turned-whistleblower.

The first survivor to cite the manual in my field interviews was Rick, whose mix of enthusiasm and frustration in that moment is instructive. As we stood in the kitchen of his apartment, Rick retrieved a photocopy of the manual from a utensil drawer and started waving it like a flag in the air. “They knew! They knew!,” Rick exclaimed, pupils widened as he tried to gauge my familiarity with the manual, “They knew in 1985. Everyone knows they knew all along God damn it!” The words Rick emphasized here, “they” and “knew” are at once completely and not at all self-explanatory.

By “they” Rick meant U.S. Catholic bishops. But, as I discussed above, the details of whether and how the manual was circulated within the NCCB are murky. Historically, the only individuals we can certify as part of this “they” are the manual’s three authors. When I tried to broach this issue with him, my splitting of hairs infuriated Rick. While I understood survivors’ embodied certitude that “the bishops” “knew all along,” I struggled to identify the historical moment, the conversion event, that had, for survivors, epistemologically transformed Doyle from a member of this hierarchical “they” to a member of the survivor movement and, ultimately, to the level of saintly adoration.

490 Fieldnotes.
Likewise, I could not understand why survivors so lovingly cherished their photocopies of a document that had been produced in order to warn the hierarchy of the potential juridical and economic threat that survivors would pose. I felt caught in the middle of a slippage, in other words, between myself and the survivors I spoke with, between this legal brief prepared for the Nuncio and “the manual,” between the historical Doyle and Saint Tom. Eventually, I realized, there was no “historical moment” that had ushered Doyle into his sanctified status within the survivor movement. Rather, survivors had created a Doyle that embodied vital qualities of a saint. To suggest that the manual did not represent what survivors have come to imagine it as would be to deny the religious reality of survivors’ collective suffering. This section explores the implications of this discursive gap between me *qua* historian and my field subjects.

My argument is that attending to this slippage forces us to reckon with aspects of the enduring legacy of preconciliar American Catholicism within the Chicago survivor movement. Whereas I am reading a document, the survivors are holding a relic. The manual as an object, rather than its scriptural contents, is what Chicago survivors adored as sacred. This relic, with the date of 1985 on its opening pages, was, for survivors, much more than the words on the page. As an artifact, the manual reassures survivors that there was at least one priest who had cared about them even before they had found the courage to voice their own abuse, even before there was a movement. This popular imagination of the manual *qua* event simultaneously allows survivors to make sense of their individual pain within a broader narrative of abuse, cover-up, and generational suffering. Similarly, the hagiography that survivors have constructed about Doyle upholds the manual as part of
his sacred body. I am not accusing survivors of a category mistake here. Rather, the centrality of the manual for survivors affirms our understanding of the embodied life of sacred texts within religious practices.

It is the compassion that the manual has come to embody for survivors which makes it so worthy of their adoration. Compassion, in its earliest instances, was a term used exclusively to describe those who suffered with Christ. Etymologically we in the English world inherited compassion via its use in Old French, where it was in turn derived from the Latin compatī, meaning literally “to suffer” (pātī) “together” (com). This etymology is significant because it helps us appreciate yet again the role of martyrdom in the creation of living saints. In the collective memory of the survivor movement, Doyle lost his job because of the manual; he sacrificed a promising career in the hierarchy so that he could speak truth to power. In the stories they told me about Doyle, Chicago survivors framed him as their first martyr. Moreover, this martyrdom came at the hands of their own Church and was punishment for his betrayal of other priests. Essentially, survivors believe

491 Although a full elaboration would exceed the constraints of a footnote, in using the phrase “his sacred body,” I am gesturing to the obvious fact that western cultures speak of “bodies” of literature as a “corpus.” Although Elizabeth Castelli likewise does not make this etymological congruence explicit, she thoroughly unpacks its significance in Martyrdom and Memory, one of the framing theoretical works for my approach to this chapter. To be brief and blunt: Peter Brown and others approach sainthood as a metaphysical connection, wherein shrines and relics are physical gateways between the living and the dead. More recent theorists, including Castelli, are at pains to draw our attention to the work of texts (written narratives, especially those attributed to the saints) in making possible that metaphysical construction. Just as a physical sacrifice may construct martyrdom, so might a written one.

492 It would be just as supercilious to accuse academics of this category mistake. After all, our colloquial use of corpus (Latin for “body”) when speaking about the entirety of an intellectual corpus derives from the same point – the high esteem within which stories by and about saints have been historically held. Cf. the footnote above. See also Anne Blackburn, “The Text and the World,” in The Cambridge Companion to Religious Studies, Robert A. Orsi, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 151 – 167.
that Doyle was martyred less for his courage in speaking or them than for his willingness to listen to survivors. In suffering alongside survivors, Doyle bore witness to the spiritual devastation of their physical abuse.

Doyle also embodied the personalist ethos essential to the spiritual and political formation of survivors. Though Doyle had at one time worked to suppress survivor claims, he later exposed what he saw (and what survivors saw) as the internal corruption that facilitated ongoing crimes against children. Doyle spoke a common language shared with activists in the survivor movement, about the dignity of persons, especially the marginalized, as well as his ongoing interest in exposing the hierarchy’s hypocrisy, two themes taken up directly in survivor protests.

From the broader vantage of religious studies, survivors’ sanctification of Doyle allows us to glimpse how collective memory is (re)shaped and rendered communally meaningful. Doyle upheld the ideal qualities of pastoral ministry that Chicago survivors remember about the Church of their youth and that they want in all of their relationships with priests. Doyle restored to many within the Chicago survivor community a level of priestly intimacy that many survivors feared they had lost forever: he fielded late night phone calls, apologized for the Church’s sins, cried with survivors, and in turn endured personal losses (career, financial) and marginalization from the Church. The survivor movement’s unearthing of this relic, “The Manual,” illustrates their need to be “vocal” and their desire to be heard. Within this framework, Doyle was not merely an ally of survivors; he was a martyr-ally who had been persecuted precisely because he spoke out
with survivors. Through this shared suffering, survivors have erected the scaffolding of sainthood in order to create and reinforce a collective narrative of a useable past.

Survivors adore Doyle for his compassion, for his suffering with and because of them. As Brown observed, “At the root of every miracle of healing at a martyr’s shrine there [lay] a miracle of pain… a body shattered.” Along similar lines, Elizabeth Castelli has theorized that “the memory work done by early Christians on the historical experience of persecution and martyrdom was a form of culture making whereby Christian identity was indelibly marked by the collective memory of the religious suffering of others.” What Castelli’s thesis misses is that this suffering of others is transubstantiated only by virtue of the perception that it is a pain shared by everyone in the community. The slippage between myself and survivors underscores the epistemic rupture between insiders and outsiders here. And this rupture is in spite of a broader shared American Catholic world wherein the phenomenological “with and because” derives directly from Christ’s crucifixion. The Messiah suffered not for himself but with and in fact because of the community he came to save. I don’t think this double move is lost on Castelli, but it appears to get buried in her contextualization of her study as deriving primarily from Maurice Halbwach’s theory of social memory. Rather than merely observing the collective memories of survivors, I am interested in attending to the Catholicity of their mythmaking. Within that Catholic framework, Doyle’s manual offers Chicago survivors a communal basis from which they can build out a local “counter-memory” that challenges the

493 Brown, Cult of Saints, 79 -80.
494 Castelli, Martyrdom and Memory, 4.
liberating way many U.S. Catholics have come to characterize and remember the era immediately after the Second Vatican Council.

As relic, Doyle’s manual represents a suffering begotten of suffering. As described above, through that double inversion, Doyle transformed the physical abuse that survivors suffered at the hands of other priests into a universalizing interpretive framework. But the manual is not Doyle’s only sacred artifact; his subsequent writings and speeches, as lesser relics, also deeply formed survivors’ understandings of their movement and its mission. Like “the manual,” Doyle’s later writings hold an emotionally persuasive capacity that owes more to their sanctified status than to the logic and experiences that inform Doyle’s prose. In particular, Doyle’s subsequent speeches and writings are paramount to understanding three trends in the Chicago survivor movement: (i) the phenomenology through which survivors have come to understand their own sexual abuse as a product of the broader abuse of priestly authority, (ii) survivors’ eagerness to seek justice within secular courts, and (iii) survivors’ understanding of the history of Canon Law as contributing directly to their own experiences of suffering.

Throughout his career within the survivor movement, Doyle has drawn a progressively sharper distinction between the Roman Catholic “hierarchy” versus the “People of God.” “The story is nearly always the same,” Doyle told the survivors at the second annual LINKUP conference, “church officials, though aware of complaints about a
given priest’s abuse of children, allowed him to remain in ministry.” In the speech, Doyle condemned what he called “the hypocrisy of power” in the Church. And he hammered this point home most forcefully in the concluding sentences of the four-minute speech:

The devastating effect that pedophilia has had on the church cannot be overstated… Trust and confidence in priests and bishops continues to erode. There is an ever widening credibility gap between the laity and the clergy, and an even wider gap between the laity and the bishops. The institutionalized clericalism that once provided built in deference for priests and bishops and a shield against the consequences of their wrong doing is dying. Thus a major barrier to the continued emergence of the Church as “People of God” is falling.

In 2003, reflecting on his own rereading of that 1993 speech, Doyle reiterated his contempt for hierarchical power. “I am struck by how little the hierarchy has changed since then, he said.” Doyle’s invocation of the “People of God” echoed threads of Catholic personalism that infuse the survivor movement, making him tremendously appealing for survivors who already embraced an ecclesiology centered on increased lay involvement and the democratization of authority within the Church.

Second, more than any other Catholic figure in the movement, Doyle has advocated that survivors sue the Church. In the 1985 “manual,” Doyle feared that legal cases would bankrupt Roman Catholic dioceses across the country. By 1993, at the latest, Doyle had transformed this fear into an aspiration. At the second LINKUP conference, Doyle praised

497 Doyle, “Clergy Sexual Abuse: The First Decade,” i.
the unique capacity of “secular” attorneys to extract penance from the Roman Catholic hierarchy:

Aggrieved families of victims and victims themselves have pursued civil actions for monetary damages against dioceses, religious communities, and church officials. Attorneys in several states have developed an expertise in bringing suit against Roman Catholic entities. The various defenses used by the Church, through its own attorneys, were gradually broken down thus increasing its vulnerability as well as its accountability not only to its own faithful but to the public in general.  

Lawsuits, Doyle would argue in subsequent speeches and writings, were in fact the only way for survivors to hold their bishops “accountable.”

Finally, the pragmatic effects of Doyle’s corpus have been seen nowhere as clearly as in prosecutorial use of canon law in survivor lawsuits. Despite the fact that Doyle had devoted fully twenty pages of the 1985 “manual” to questions of “Canonical Issues,” he had only written a few sentences about the potential import of canon law within secular courts. In fact, Doyle had argued that the Church might be able to use canon law as a means of defending itself against potential allegations of negligence in U.S. courts. Nevertheless, he also laid out the possibility that a savvy plaintiff’s lawyer might be able to harness canon law against accused dioceses and bishops. What strikes me most about this section is the fact that Doyle seems stretched to imagine the extra-theological implications of a code so dear to him:

It is well founded in civil cases that operation manuals, policy and procedures, memoranda, and other documents generated as guidelines by the civil defendant may be utilized in evidence. That the code of Canon Law actually has the effect of Law over our personnel shall make it only more relevant. The impact may be

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negative or positive depending on the preparation of the civil lawyer and the participation of a canon lawyer in cases where the issue presents itself.\textsuperscript{499}

Despite his previous efforts to shield the Church from financial liability, Saint Tom embodies for survivors a multitude of qualities scholars have traditionally associated with Catholic holiness. He is a saint in the fundamental sense of being survivors’ first witness, their first whistleblower. As Delooz argued, it is not merely that saints bear witness, but moreover that they \textit{are refashioned} by their devotees as the witnesses of and for that community.\textsuperscript{500} Doyle’s martyrdom comes not in the form of physical sacrifice, but in the involuntary sacrifice of his promising career, effectively cut short by his involvement in the clergy sexual abuse crisis. Doyle also became a martyr in his voluntary resistance to the hierarchy. This reading of Doyle thus fits nicely within Elizabeth Johnson’s efforts to redefine martyrdom “as refusing to submit to oppression.”\textsuperscript{501} But officially canonized saints also offer us many precedents for conceptualizing of martyrdom as \textit{not necessarily} physical death. “Short of physical death,” observed Weinstein, “suffering at the hands of prelates was considered a prominent form of martyrdom.”\textsuperscript{502} The fact that “the Manual” was not taken seriously by the NCCB leadership does not render Doyle peculiar within the litany of saints. Rather, it suggests that Doyle was prophetic in a less frequently recognized sense of the word. Namely, the interplay of comedy and tragedy in the history of “the Manual” reminds me of the understanding of some saints as “fools for Christ.” These

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\textsuperscript{499} Doyle et. al., “The Problem of Sexual Molestation by Roman Catholic Clergy,”36.
\textsuperscript{500} Delooz, \textit{Op. Cit.}, 189.
\textsuperscript{502} Weinstein, \textit{Op. Cit.}, 158.
\end{flushleft}
fools represent a forgotten model of sainthood, argues Lawrence Cunningham, wherein “poor, eccentric, often despised wanderers who secretly carried within them a burning love for Christ willing accepted the gibes of the world and the humiliations that went with them. Such fools were free to speak truth to power and served a prophetic function.”\textsuperscript{503} Lastly, the timing of Saint Tom’s \textit{de facto} canonization further places him within the analytical bounds of our historical understanding of holy men. Institutional and spiritual crisis, in particular, dominate the hagiography of “official” saints. To paraphrase Douillet, “Foremost, saints are respondents to specific moments of crisis in the church.”\textsuperscript{504} With that in mind, I will now turn to the second most venerated survivor saint who has emerged from the clergy abuse crisis, Saint Richard, patron friend of anticlericalism.

\textbf{Saint Richard, Patron Friend of Anticlericalism}

At the start of our second conversation, I asked Rick to tell me what he remembered of the first LINKUP conference. Rick’s face lit up in a wide grin as he said, in a rhythmically deliberate enunciation, “Welcome. To. Wittenberg.” This statement achieved the kind of quizzical expression he probably expected from me, giving Rick time to start explaining this provocation:

A lot happened that year. It was all new. Press. Survivors from all over the country. But what I remember most clearly was Sipe, when he got up there in front of all those cameras, and said, “Welcome to Wittenberg.” The room fell silent. Nobody expected him to say that. And then, all of a sudden, everyone exploded with excitement. That’s the first time I felt like I knew this was something important – that this was all something bigger than just me and the other survivors.

\textsuperscript{503} Cunningham, \textit{History of the Saints}, 48.
\textsuperscript{504} Douillet 103; Cf. Weinstein 109.
We could start a revolution. We were putting the church on notice. The conference was like our theses, you know, Luther. And the sex abuse stuff was just the tip of the iceberg. That’s what I took away from the conference.\footnote{Interview with the author, June 20, 2012.}

Over the following years, Rick came to consider Sipe a friend. But the way Rick talked about Sipe demonstrated that this was an extraordinary friendship. Rick told me more about his “friend,” and St. Richard’s miraculous works. Sipe had predicted the sexual abuse scandal in the 1950s. Sipe had warned the Church that it was sick in the 1960s. And finally, exhausted and fed up, Sipe left the priesthood in 1970 in a courageous act of protest. “Like Luther,” Rick again emphasized.\footnote{Interview with the author, June 20, 2012.}

In this section, I analyze Sipe’s path to living beatification within the survivor movement. As I demonstrate, Sipe’s lifelong crusade against mandatory celibacy was reinvigorated by the rise of LINKUP. Indeed, the broader clergy abuse scandal provided Sipe with an opportune platform from which to vilify bishops while reassuring priests and former priests that they were actually victims of the same culture that had enabled the sexual abuse of children. I also demonstrate how one of the core beliefs of the Chicago survivor movement – the much cited explanatory principle that “it all comes down to power” – owes largely to the discursive genealogy of celibacy that Sipe introduced into the early survivor movement.

Aquinas Walter Richard Sipe was born in the rural mid-western town of Robbinsdale, Minnesota on December 11, 1932. Sipe’s father was an industrious German
Catholic who owned a chain of local gas stations and espoused free market capitalism. As an older child, Sipe imagined the priesthood as a way to make his family proud. “You know, when you’re one of ten kids, how do you make your mark?” Sipe recalls.\textsuperscript{507} In 1946, as a young adolescent, Sipe entered St. John’s Preparatory School in Collegeville, Minnesota, a minor seminary. Over the following thirteen years, he progressed through St. John’s College and Seminary and trained at the Collegio Sant’Anselmo in Rome (the Seat of the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation).\textsuperscript{508} In 1959, Sipe was ordained into the Benedictine order of the Roman Catholic priesthood and assigned as a student counselor at Saint Boniface High School. According to Sipe, it was in this role that he “became immediately aware of sexual activity by priests.”\textsuperscript{509} That experience “prompted” what Sipe describes as his “25-year ethnographic study of the celibate/sexual behavior of Roman Catholic priests.”\textsuperscript{510} Indeed, although he was never trained as a historian, Sipe’s career demonstrates a sustained fascination with the history of the vow of celibacy. In his writing, celibacy would become a key explanatory device for explaining the causes and context of clergy sexual abuse.

In 1965, Sipe returned to St. John’s Abbey to serve as the executive director of the St. John’s University Institute for Mental Health. Within the relatively small professional circle of priest-psychologists, Sipe was building a name for himself, and in 1967 he relocated to assume leadership of the family services division at Seton Psychiatric Institute

\textsuperscript{507} Sipe, “About Richard,” http://awrsipe.com/about.html
\textsuperscript{508} Sipe, Curriculum Vitae, March 20, 2014. (accessed via awrsipe.com)
\textsuperscript{509} Statement to the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts, in The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a Corporation Sole, plaintiff, vs. Lumbermen’s Mutual Casualty Company, 1 May 2005.
\textsuperscript{510} Sipe, “About Richard,” http://awrsipe.com/about.html
in Baltimore, Maryland. From this clinical outpost on the eastern seaboard, Sipe retained his formal administrative roles at St. John’s until 1970, when he received permission from the Vatican to leave the priesthood to marry a psychiatrist, Dr. Marianne Benkert, M.D.

The couple and their son remained in the greater Baltimore area for three decades, during which Benkert served in prominent professional roles such as president of the Baltimore County Medical Association and chair of the Ethical and Judicial Affairs Council of the Medical Faculty of Maryland. Throughout the 1970s, Sipe taught as an adjunct professor of counseling at Loyola College in Maryland, Saint Mary’s Seminary, and Johns Hopkins University. In 1978, Archdiocese of Baltimore retained Sipe as a staff consultant for clergy and religious. In 1980, he completed a MS from Loyola College Baltimore and then obtained, in swift succession, clinical licensure as a National Certified Counselor, a Mental Health Counselor, and a Psychiatrist Assistant. Sipe’s medical career culminated in an administrative role within the Family/Child Therapy Fellows Program at John’s Hopkins Medical School. While pursuing this career, Sipe began to write prolifically about the psychological, emotional, and social effects what he calls the problem of the sexual/celibate system in Roman Catholicism.

After publishing numerous articles for Catholic periodicals and trade magazines, Sipe published his first book, *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy* (*1990*), which earned him several media invitations for talk show appearances alongside

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511 Sipe’s curriculum vitae does not specify the field of his MS degree.
Jeanne Miller. Although *A Secret World* contained only one chapter on child sexual abuse, the 1992 LINKUP conference was where Sipe’s path towards survivor canonization began, when he appeared alongside Doyle and Greeley as priestly supporters of survivors. By his second book, *Sex, Priests, and Power: Anatomy of a Crisis (1995)*, Sipe had rearticulated his entire understanding of celibacy around the emergent crisis of priestly sexual abuse. He discovered in the problem of priestly pedophilia an explanatory lens for advancing his theory that celibacy is the secretive structure through which all Catholic power is coded. In 2000, Sipe and Benkert retired from medicine and relocated to La Jolla, California, allowing him to devote even more time to the survivor movement. When the Boston, 2002 scandal erupted, Sipe was a valuable asset to the national newsrooms that were scrambling for expert analysis. He was also well positioned to send his third book to press, *Celibacy in Crisis: A Secret World Revisited (2003)*.

Sipe’s distinct agenda dovetailed with calls from within the survivor movement for the marriage of priests and the ordination of women. In *A Secret World: Sexuality and the Search for Celibacy*, Sipe made arguments against clerical celibacy that he has continued to elaborate throughout his prolific writing career. This early book detailed the sexual lives of priests, demonstrating that despite the official mandate for Catholic priests to remain celibate, most bishops and priests lacked a consistent definition of celibacy. Moreover, the majority of priests consistently engaged in a range of sexual behaviors. Because they were

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512 This was the first book Sipe authored. But note that, on both his C.V. and website, Sipe proudly lists his first authored book as *Psychiatry, Ministry, and Pastoral Counseling* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1984), which was actually a volume of essays on that topic from a range of clinical psychologists, which Sipe had coedited with Clarence J. Rowe.
defying the prohibition on celibacy, priests who had sexual relations with other adults went on to experience a range of negative consequences, including guilt, anxiety, and substance abuse.

Sipe’s early work contained many observations that survivors later found prescient. He devoted considerable space in *A Secret World* to priestly sexual abuse of minors. Despite the small numbers of survivors that had come forward in the early 1990s, Sipe predicted that many more allegations would come to the fore, with the potential to produce a tremendous financial and spiritual crisis within the Church. In this work, Sipe’s attention was mainly on the psychological and emotional lives of priests and less on the debilitating effects on survivors, though he also discussed the long-term problems that many survivors experience. He was also more concerned with the financial threat that these abuses posed than with addressing the concerns of survivors. Part of what I am tracing here is that Sipe and Doyle only slowly surrendered their insider status. However, it is easy to see why survivors seized on his work as affirming their experiences. Sipe confirmed not only that these abuses took place, but that bishops had a vested interest in denying and suppressing allegations about them. As a result, he believed that the abuses were probably more widespread than had been initially reported.

In the early twenty-first century, survivors looked to Sipe’s early work as prophetic because he appeared to predict the crisis that sexual abuse of minors would provoke. In 2012, Sipe acknowledged and then disavowed the label of “prophetic voice”: Some people who know the extent of my work have attributed to me what I could never claim for myself – a whistleblower and a prophetic voice. To me this commitment is simply part of the continuum of my life, work, and vocation. I feel
moral and spiritually bound to see that the facts about the priesthood are made visible, victims vindicated, and children and the vulnerable protected from any abusive aspect of power corruption in the church.\footnote{Sipe, www.awrsipe.com/Interviews/2012-11-05-FAQ.html.}

But it is precisely Sipe’s ongoing crusade to expose corruption and to protect innocent laypersons that have facilitated his construction as a survivor saint. In the narrative constructed by survivors, the clergy, who are the designated mediators between the laity and God, have neglected their role. In their place, Sipe emerged as a prophetic voice, a former priest who spoke “truth to power,” exposing the deepest secrets of the Church. He especially railed against the hypocrisy of clerical authority. For survivors, Sipe has a special authority derived from his unique access to the “the truth,” as a former priest, mental health professional, and outspoken critic of the hierarchy.

Sipe did not just speak prophetic truth in an ordinary moment in Church history; rather his work suggested that the Church faced momentous upheaval. The predictions of his early work seemed to be borne out by the lawsuits, media coverage, and public criticism directed at the Church in the early 2000s. As several theorists of sainthood argue, hagiographies of saints uplift the role of saints as responders to specific moments of crisis in the Church. Sipe’s work in fact constructs the historical narrative that serves as the basis for his sanctification. In Sipe’s telling, the Church faced an ongoing crisis of sexuality that threatened to bring down the entire Church. He argued that the exposure of sexual abuse and its cover up would result in a revolution as far reaching as the 16th century Protestant
In all of his writings, Sipe names celibacy as the basis for clerical authority, but he never articulates how exactly celibacy effects this power. In the effort to name celibacy as the central issue plaguing the Church, he glosses over geographical, cultural, and historical factors that have produced different manifestations of Catholic authority. However unsatisfying from an academic perspective, his narrative had enormous appeal to members of the survivor movement, who were already interested, through their connections to Catholic Action, in reforming the Church’s sexual guidelines for clergy and laity alike.

Survivors perceive Sipe as a prophet because of his unique capacity, as a self-described former clinical psychologist to “hundreds of clergy pedophiles,” to reverse the confessional veil. In his books, Sipe emphasizes the specifically Catholic construction of secret, intimate spaces, such as the sacristy, that priests shared with children. Sipe likewise uplifts the social and educational roles that priests performed in the formation of childhood and adolescent identity. But most of all, Sipe is devoted to unmasking the Catholic dynamics of priestly seduction and coercion:

Thousands of Catholic men recall fondly their childish heroism in trekking through the snow or rain to serve at 6:00 am Mass. They frequently report having experienced a sense of pride and honor at being close to something as sacred as the altar and the consecrated bread and wine. They report a feeling of specialness at having been able to dress up like a priest, hold the golden paten, carry the cross or chalice, and perform services that were off limits even to the holy nuns who taught them in school… but for some, the experience of being an altar boy was stripped of its sense of the sacred and deprived of a memory of real fun and community… because these boys were selected by a certain kind of priest for his private sexual

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514 Sipe, *Celibacy in Crisis*, 323.
This transformation of the altar – from a site of honor, prestige and sacrality to one of shame, guilt, and betrayal – at once validated survivors’ own memories of their abuse and reinforced survivors’ anger at the fact that they were abused religiously, and in distinctly Catholic contexts. The appeal of Sipe’s anticlerical conspiracism lies in that it (re)locates the roots of survivors’ pain and suffering within the hierarchical authority, sacramental rituals, and distinctive role of children in 20th century American Catholicism. Although Sipe never experienced abuse, his writing brought the reader into that sacristy from the perspective of a young Catholic altar boy.

The survivor movement constructs Sipe as a witness to the widespread, deleterious effects of celibacy in the Church, of which the abuse of minors was the most egregious and morally corrupt, but certainly not the only, negative consequence. Etymologically, the term “martyr” refers to the power of witness and serves as a profoundly important trope in the construction of saints. Unlike Doyle, Sipe’s itinerary does not include personal loss on account of survivors, because he had already left the priesthood decades prior. Instead, members of the survivor movement look back to Sipe’s multiple writings, spanning more than thirty years, in which Sipe decried the far-reaching abuses of priestly celibacy, from the psychological effects on priests, the exclusion of women from authority, and the illegitimate power conferred on priests as a result of the celibacy mandate.

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As he wrote books, gave courtroom testimony, and spoke at survivor conferences, Sipe laid the blame for these transgressive and immoral acts at the feet of the hierarchy, its mandatory celibacy, and its culture of secrecy surrounding sex. Denied the opportunity to pursue their sexual desires in a healthy, affirming manner, priests resorted to immoral, criminal behavior. Drawing on mid-century studies of sexuality, including Alfred Kinsey’s, Sipe maintained that the hierarchy’s insistence that any sex outside of marriage constituted a grave sin contradicted basic human nature. In Sipe’s writing, mandated celibacy gave rise to a variety of negative institutional effects:

It forms a synergism within a *homosocial culture* that fosters and rewards psychosexual immaturity or regression. Emotion and social dependence, overvalued conformity, a sense of entitlement, assurance of superiority, the arrogance of absolute certitude and immunity from criticism or personal responsibility for mistakes, are all constitutive elements of the Catholic clerical culture.\(^{516}\)

This emphasis on the homosocial culture of the priesthood forms the basis for Sipe’s broader reform agenda within the church, a theme that emerged early in his writing and would only become amplified as the sexual abuse crisis unfolded. In his early writing and advocacy, the sexual abuse of minors was one among many negative results of celibacy because it led to unhealthy and criminal expressions of sexuality. Over time, it would take on a more prominent role in Sipe’s writing as the sexual abuse crisis became a platform through which his anti-celibacy crusade could be promoted. Most importantly for survivors, Sipe’s writings on celibacy focused on the hierarchy’s inclination toward

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516 A.W. Richard Sipe, “Interview with Luxembourg’s Alliance of Humanists, Atheists, and Agnostics.”
secrecy. He argued that this lack of transparency was so entrenched that it would prevent the hierarchy from assuming responsibility for committed abuses, leading it to perpetuate crimes that hurt children and their families.  

In his second book, published in 1995, Sipe’s tone shifted to address what he called the “crisis of epic proportions” confronting the Church. For Sipe, the cause of the entire abuse crisis had become crystal clear:

The scandal of the priestly sexual abuse of minors, although real and significant, is primary a symptom of an essentially flawed celibate/sexual system of ecclesiastical power. Analysis of the function and structure of the celibate/sexual system demonstrates that it is based on a false understanding of the nature of human sexuality and primary Christian experience… To expose the system is to confront Catholic Christianity with the most profound crisis of its integrity since the earlier centuries of its existence.

Power and sex were intimately linked in Sipe’s historical account, in which celibacy enabled the Church to consolidate its power over the non-celibate laity, who were subject to the “clear and unbending sexual moral doctrine” that any sexual act outside of marriage was a mortal sin.

This connection between sex and power underscores Sipe’s conviction that the sexual abuse crisis is a symptom of a broader sexual crisis that has corrupted the Catholic Church from within. It is this sexual crisis that must be exposed and acknowledged if the Catholic Church has any chance of reform. In particular, he railed against the culture of secrecy. That is, according to Sipe, priests and bishops maintained the ruse of celibacy,

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while having active sexual lives that directly contradicted that doctrine. All along, they benefitted from the authority that celibacy afforded them. Moreover, beyond its base definition, Sipe maintained that the Church lacked a robust definition of celibacy, failing that further obscured its actual practice to the laity and the broader non-Catholic public:

The implications were clear: “sexuality and accountability cannot coexist.” Open discourse on celibacy and an examination of the relationship of the celibate/sexual system to child abuse have great implications for a church that stabilizes its power around a reality it refuses to examine.520

That is, the sexual power structure of the Catholic Church was responsible for both the abuse of minors in priests’ care and its cover up. For their part, bishops and other higher members of the church hierarchy hid behind the doctrine of celibacy to downplay, deny, or obfuscate the sexual realities of their clerical subordinates.

Sipe further argued that the lack of lay adherence to sexual mores as set by the church was a manifestation of the same crisis. That is, only a fraction of lay Catholics believed and followed the sexual prescriptions. The theology thus had no foundation in common, twentieth century understandings of the psychology and the biology of human sexuality or in the actual practices of lay Catholics. The lack of lay affinity for these doctrines reflected other erasures of practice and devotion in the twentieth century and threatened to diminish the Church’s ability to retain the faithful. In Sipe’s narrative, celibacy was the source of enormous clerical power, as an ascetic practice that the laity did not follow and gave the clergy access to spiritual depth that the laity could not access. But the sexual abuse crisis laid bare the ways that the Church used this supposed superiority to

520 Sipe, Sex, Priests, and Power, 62.
consolidate its power. Reform the celibacy regime, Sipe argued, and the relevance and power of the Church would potentially be restored.

In 2003, Sipe published *Celibacy in Crisis: A Secret World Revisited*, immediately following the *Boston Globe*’s exposé of clergy sexual abuse. In Sipe’s opinion, the Boston investigations provided indisputable evidence that his prior arguments linking celibacy, abuse, and secrecy had been prophetic:

> By exposing the dynamic that supported, and conspired to keep secret the individual priest abusers they [*The Boston Globe*] tapped into the lifeblood of Boston Catholic power – the pope’s representative – Cardinal Law. They unfolded the *pattern* – almost a template – that was being used generally in American dioceses to hid abusing priests, and silence victims.\(^{521}\)

For Sipe, sexual abuse is a symptom of a “secret and corrupt mode of operation” and part of an entire “secret system of celibate violation.”\(^{522}\) This secret system was entrenched; the cover-up of sexual abuse of minors was just another symptom of the ongoing secrecy surrounding clerical celibacy. The pattern of clerical denial, carried out at all levels, was well established by the time that large numbers of accusations broke. Sipe’s critique of celibacy provided survivors with an explanation of why the hierarchy protected abusers rather than survivors. He showed that the celibacy mandate inevitably produced a lack of transparency and because it denied basic truths about the moral and sexual natures of human beings.

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\(^{522}\) Sipe, *Celibacy in Crisis*, 201.
Orchestrated from the highest levels of ecclesiastic power, Sipe argued, both the corrupt system of celibacy and the subsequent denial of systemic abuse demonstrate the specific ways that the hierarchy has enabled (and implicitly facilitated) the psychological and sexual disorders of its clergy and destroyed the lives of survivors. His emphasis on the systemic and deliberate actions of the clerical hierarchy produced an important counter narrative for survivors that replaced bishops’ and priests’ claims that they lacked knowledge of the abuse or the extent of the abuse.

Sipe’s narrative also placed the blame firmly at the feet of cardinals and bishops. Although he unequivocally declared sexual abuse of minors to be a crime, punishable by the courts, Sipe devoted much more attention to the accountability and culpability of the hierarchy. In his narrative, priests (both innocent and abusing priests) and survivors suffered under the same corrupt policies and practices. They suffered from similar disastrous and often permanent psychological and emotional outcomes: psychological trauma, addiction, depression, and distorted sexual identities. By minimizing the individual culpability of priests, Sipe stressed the structural factors that facilitated abuse. He frequently called the Church “a total system,” claiming that there is “little distinction between self and institution and thus one’s value is subsumed by identification with the power, prestige and status of the Church.”

Sipe cast priests as more sympathetic figures, especially compared with bishops and cardinals. This is not entirely surprising because, as a former priest, Sipe lauded the integrity and morality of those priests who managed to avoid the deleterious effects of

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celibacy. With the right psychological, personal, and familial factors, he maintained that this was possible even under such a far-reaching system. This narrative opened up space for survivors to uphold individual priests as friends and protectors. They, too, had been subject to a corrupt system but had managed to overcome the system to stand up for justice. But these priests had to be exceptional individuals in order to challenge the overwhelming power of the system of which they were a part. The corruption of the system explained why, for Sipe, priests who did not abuse children, but also did not report on other priests, were also not responsible for the crimes of the bishops and other superiors.

Sipe used the revelations from his therapy sessions (in his capacity as both psychologist and former priest) with priests to absolve survivors of any responsibility for the abuses they endured. By focusing on celibacy and power, Sipe provided a powerful explanatory model that absolved most individual priests, parishioners, and survivors of moral responsibility. In doing so, he articulated the source of the problem, while also demanding that cardinals, bishops, and priests confess their crimes against survivors. As a former priest, he insisted that the clergy acknowledge its ongoing sexual failures to the laity. Sipe’s appeal to survivors lay in his articulation of the most powerful motivators of survivor advocacy and activism. As we have seen, survivors desire not just for their voices to be heard by the clergy but to have their suffering acknowledged by those that committed, facilitated and covered up the abuse.
Patron Friends

As readers have undoubtedly noticed, I have used the phrase “patron friend” throughout this chapter, a term that suggests that the two predominant models that theorists and theologians have developed for understanding the relationship between devotees and their saints are not inherently antithetical. Simply sticking with the familiar model of “patron” would have been tidier, but it also would have been misleading. The argument underlying my choice of this phrasing is that neither patronage nor friendship alone precisely captures the emotions survivors feel towards these men and their role within the Chicago survivor movement.

The fact that some survivors perceive Doyle and Sipe as their intimate friends should be clear by now. Shawn cherishes her regular e-mail exchanges with Doyle. Rick tenderly adores the photographs of the first time he and Sipe “hung out” at a survivor conference. Recognizing these e-mails and portraits as relics opens up the possibility that survivors’ saints are “companions,” in the archetypical sense recognized by Peter Brown. In his theorization of sainthood as the “Invisible Companion,” Brown argues that companionship was perhaps the earliest form of Catholic devotionalism. “From the fourth century onwards,” Brown writes,

The cult of saints had ringed the populations of the Mediterranean with intimate invisible friends. The ‘invisible friend’ – ἀόρατος φίλος – and the ‘intimate friend’ – γνήσιος φίλος: these are the terms on which Theodoret and his contemporaries dwelt lovingly in relation to the saints… invisible beings who were fellow humans and whom they could invest with the precise and palpable features of beloved and
powerful figures in their own society.\textsuperscript{524} Brown recognizes that companionship is at the heart of this relationship, and that it is through the “linking of the identity with an ideal invisible companion” that many early Christians forged their sense of identity and belonging.\textsuperscript{525} Brown buries this less celebrated model of sainthood beneath his analysis of saint as a patron (\textit{patronus}). Devotees experience their patron saint as intrinsic to their very being, as much a part of them as their own thoughts, and as physically present (\textit{praesentia}), albeit invisible, beings. Brown’s model of patronage also stresses the capacity of saints to politically empower believers (\textit{potentia}).\textsuperscript{526} For Brown, this shift from friend to \textit{patronus} was a teleological development that was inevitable given the rapid hierarchicization of the Church in fourth century C.E. The saint “friend” was “rewired” into “the \textit{patronus}, the invisible, heavenly concomitant of the patronage exercised palpably on earth by the bishop.”\textsuperscript{527} Brown thus theorizes patronage sainthood as intrinsically \textit{medieval}, that is, as a model of sanctity permanently entwined with the social paradigm of feudalism. Before addressing the limits of \textit{patronus} for understanding Sipe and Doyle as living saints, I want to point out the four aspects in which patronage is helpful for understanding survivorhood: (i) democratization, (ii) priestly sanctification, (iii) local power, and (iv) exorcism of guilt.

The survivor movement’s replication of patriarchal structures in its valorization of these two priestly males appears to sit in tension with a democratizing impulse at work

\textsuperscript{524} Brown, \textit{Cult of Saints}, 50.  
\textsuperscript{525} Brown, \textit{Cult of Saints}, 57.  
\textsuperscript{526} These are the Latin terms that Brown uses throughout \textit{Cult of Saints}, and which dominate the titles and foci of the book’s concluding chapters. \textsuperscript{527} Brown, \textit{Cult of Saints}, 38.
here, an attempt by survivors to de-hierarchize the Church that echoes Catholic Action. Chicago survivors seem unable to imagine a Catholicism without priests, yet they revel in imagining a priesthood devoid of cardinals and bishops. By adopting Sipe’s and Doyle’s assertion that celibacy is the bedrock of power and authority within the Roman Catholic church, survivors find explanatory meaning for their abuse and a productive cause for that suffering. The patronage model is certainly at work in the Chicago survivor movement, particularly in the community’s discrete political interests and in their embrace of the democratizing spirit of post-conciliar liberation theologies. Brown proposes that the popular status of saints is what makes them so appealing to everyday believers (and so dangerous to established prelates). “Popular,” Brown explicates, “let me suggest that we take seriously its late-Roman meaning: the ability of the few to mobilize the support of the many… So much of what we call the ‘democratization of culture’ in late antiquity was actually democratization from on top.”

Thinking with Brown, I am suggesting that the Chicago survivor movement might help us reframe our understanding of sainthood within lived Catholicism(s) of the twenty first century. Brown’s classical training led him to an insight here that most scholars of American religions have underappreciated, namely the possibility that Catholics have long held democratic impulses that we fail to appreciate because they are embodied in forms antithetical to a narrowly Protestant understanding of democracy. I am thus following the handful of historians and theoreticians who have developed the concept of “Catholic distinctiveness.” This term comes from Robert Orsi, and variants of the concept have been likewise advocated by John McGreevy and James

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528 Brown, Cult of Saints, 48.
Fisher. I am arguing, in other words, that survivors’ admiration for Sipe and Doyle as saints is not in tension with the movements’ democratizing impulses, but rather representative of a distinctly Catholic understanding of democracy.

Second, recognizing the ongoing relevance of the *patronus* model within the survivor movement likewise allows us to appreciate the limits of this particular Catholic imaginary. Survivors’ saints – Doyle, Sipe, Greeley, Economus, Gumbleton, McClory, Cozzens, Robinson – are all *male*. And not just male, but also current or former priests. None of the female founders of the Chicago survivor movement – not Jeanne Miller, not Marilyn Steffel, not Barbara Blaine – have been elevated by survivors into the community’s *de facto communio sanctum*. I discussed this historical and rhetorical ironies of this patriarchal pattern in Chapter Two. Understanding these patriarchs as saints reveals a consistent lived theology at work. These priests, *qua* priests, imbue the Chicago survivor movement with a level of legitimacy and prestige in relation to the broader community of U.S. Catholics. These saints provide survivors with a line of defense, a shield, from the impulse to dismiss survivors as merely former Catholics or, equally common in popular lay discourse, as *anti*-Catholics.

By claiming these priests as their saints, Chicago survivors claim their own Catholicity. These priests, these precious few male clerics who have stood in suffering next to survivors, listened to pain of survivors, and spoken publicly on behalf of the pain of survivors, are the most powerful local resource available to the Chicago survivor community. They claim inclusion in the identity of communal belonging inherent in being Catholic. For Brown, this is a social and political claim, a “proprietary relationship” that is
often fought over “from one community to another” precisely because having a saint – that is, claiming to be the community that was glorified by the saint’s holy works and which now holds the keys to the saint’s corpus as relics – “heightens the special status to the level of the Christian elite, making them privileged agents, personally involved in administering the loving kindness of God.” This model of patronage, Brown recognized, is particularly valuable for marginalized communities. “It is in this way that little communities,” he writes, “grappled with the facts of local power in a changing world.”

This is what I mean when I say that the Chicago survivor movement is local. Some members have moved to New Mexico, California, Connecticut, and Canada. But they remain connected digitally and phenomenologically with the Chicago movement.

Moreover, the survivor movement as a whole represents a marginalized community of Catholics. They have been marginalized within the legislative and judicial procedures of their nation-state, and they have been marginalized by their Church. Former friends and fellow parishioners have not infrequently turned survivors away from their doorsteps, and most American bishops and cardinals have been at pains to portray survivors as former Catholics. Survivors have been relegated spatially to a community that protests outside of the church, beyond the sacred. As a liminal community of limited socioeconomic means, Chicago survivors are still searching for their identity, and in that quest they grasp imaginatively at the robes of these saints in hope and fear. Survivors drink the ideology of these saints to quench their thirst for intelligibility and meaning. For such a marginalized community...

530 Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 105.
religious community, these saints are a local treasure. Sipe and Doyle represent “the height of the diffuse resources of the neighborhood.”

Fourth, survivors have turned to these saints to exorcise guilt. Indeed, the miraculous and prophetic acts that have made Doyle and Sipe into saints can be reduced to acts of confession. By leveraging their knowledge that the sexual abuse of children was indeed *systemic*, Sipe and Doyle absolved themselves of their complicity as priests. More importantly, they have dedicated their careers within the survivor movement to, in a sense, *forcing* the confessions of American prelates. In their professional capacities, too, Sipe as psychologist and Doyle as lawyer have literally forged their respective careers at the crux of interrogating fellow priests. These interrogations remind me of the patron saint’s *potentia* to exorcise demons and extract “rough justice.” In their public denouncements of the hierarchy and their private conversations with survivors, Doyle and Sipe are uniquely capable of doling out a form of divine justice that has been absent from the secular courts. And sometimes they are cutthroat in doing so. From the viewpoint of survivors, these saints are the only powers strong enough to force American bishops to publically confess their sins. The hardscrabble, no-holds-barred public personae of Sipe and Doyle thus offers survivors a sanctified testimony, a witness born of confession, “a sincerity that pain alone can guarantee.”

In a parallel process, Doyle’s and Sipe’s apparent anticlericalism offers to absolve survivors of their own guilt. (Recall my discussions of survivors’ guilt in the first three

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531 Brown, *Cult of Saints*, 120.  
chapters). By pointing their fingers, unequivocally, at the “culture of power created by the system of celibacy,” Doyle and Sipe provide an interpretive lens that avoids the even more painful possibility that laypersons were also implicated in generating and sustaining the sociocultural and religious norms that made the abuses systemic. Here, I am speaking of survivors’ parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and fellow parishioners. Many survivors were put in vulnerable situations by their parents. And Catholic parents desired, indeed relied heavily upon, that vulnerability. The reason why Jeanne Miller sent her son on a camping trip with their priest was so that Fr. Mayer would sort the boy out. It was not just priests’ and nuns’ divine authority, but the forceful and often physical ways in which clergy would enforce that authority on survivors. Survivors’ saints thus offer the hope of healing through a set of interpersonal confessions, offered by priests, and absolutions granted by laypeople.

Lastly, what of Sipe’s and Doyle’s guilt? The stories that survivors tell themselves about these men are almost too perfect. I am thinking here of Virginia Burrus’s work. Building on Foucault’s fascination with the confessional as a space of constructing one’s identity through the acting of witnessing against oneself, Burrus has persuasively suggested that shame, particularly the disgraced, naked body, was the productive category par excellence for early saints. In spite of its obvious relevance, shamefulness is not part of the public personas that Sipe and Doyle have crafted, at least not explicitly. One might expect that these men would feel shameful for having remained silent for years after they

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had each, according to their own narratives, become aware of the epidemic of priestly sexual abuse. Instead, their beatification revolves around their sacrifice of the priestly office. Survivors admire these saints for having offered the sacrifice of all other priests, for effectively dedicating their careers to tearing down the institutional class of the priesthood as men above men. Within this less articulated framework, survivors reason that if they had seen, as children, these priests as merely acting in the name of Christ (instead of being His earthly presence), they might have had the courage to stand up to their abusers, or at least to voice their pain and suffering to their loved ones. Therefore, to the extent that Sipe and Doyle’s status as saints has been constructed around shame, it is the shame these authors feel for the priesthood. By shaming the collar they once wore with such pride, these saints gain the further admiration of some members of the survivor movement.

While these four aspects of patronage illuminate my ethnographic observations, the patronus does not exhaust the meanings these saints hold for survivors. Even as Sipe and Doyle embody aspects of patronage, we must still account for the extent to which Chicago survivors imagine these men as among their most intimate friends. Shawn has created relics from the stories that she sent Doyle about her family and the updates Doyle sent Shawn about his life. Yes, the content of their electronic letters includes intimate readings of substance abuse, marriage, sexuality, and Catholic theology. But many of the pages Shawn clutched that day in the manila folder sharpied “Tom” were simply photographs of her own daughter and granddaughter, notes from her family vacations, and “secret” family recipes for baking and cooking. In a very real way, theirs was a friendship of love and
trust, hewn more from the shared detritus of everyday life than from intersecting agendas for ecclesiastical reform.

Likewise, the photograph Rick so proudly showed me was not of Sipe alone, but of him and Sipe sitting next to each other on an unassuming couch, their adjacent arms resting on the back of the couch behind one another. If I had seen the photograph in any other context, I would not hesitate to describe this pose as a form of a hug. My hesitation comes from the enormous political and socioeconomic gulf separating Rick from this other Richard in their everyday lives. Rick delivered pizzas and drove a Yellow Cab taxi until his health was so poor that he needed to use an oxygen tank continuously. After a long day of delivering people (or their food), Rick came home to a lonely, modest second floor apartment in a grimy neighborhood that abutted the I-90 and I-94 beltway split. During these same years, Sipe and his wife (an accomplished doctor in her own right) enjoyed their early retirement in the exclusive beachfront community of La Jolla, California, where the median single family home price is $2.1 million. This socioeconomic disparity makes it challenging for me to conceive of Rick and Richard as close friends. To read the photograph through Rick’s description of it is to come away with a portrait of instantaneous love and companionship. But to look at the photo and think critically of their separate lives is to consider the possibility that this image was more like the snapshot one takes when meeting the Pope. While I lean toward this latter reading, it was not my place to correct Rick. To suggest to Rick that perhaps Sipe did not really reciprocate his love would have been as insensitive as if I had argued with Doreen about whether or not St. Francis had actually saved her marriage. As an ethnographer, my role is to try to
understand the intimate terms of religious relationships, not to dismantle them. What is essential here is that Rick knew that Sipe was a confidant, that Rick felt Sipe’s friendship every day.

The paradigm of supernatural friendship explains several elements of the relationship between survivors and their saints that we would miss by limiting our lens to the patronage model: (i) wisdom, (ii) healing, and (iii) hope. First, Doyle and Sipe are companions in hope and justice, and their friendship (real or imagined) provides survivors a bedrock of communal wisdom. Their books and speeches have created the backbone for subsequent narratives of how survivors understand themselves in relation to the tradition that betrayed them when they were children. As (ex)priests writing from within the Roman Catholic tradition, these saints give testimony, at an unrivaled level of intimate witness, to the religious distinctiveness of survivors’ experiences of suffering. Here, it is companionship itself that transforms survivors’ pain into a discourse of subversive remembrance. Whereas the patronage model accounts for the democratizing impulse undergirding the survivor movement, it misses the fact way that survivors have harnessed a renewed intimacy with priests in creating their communal counter-memory. It is this recognition of lay agency that is most lacking in the patronus model. Survivors empower these priests by sanctifying them. Their communal reimagining of Roman Catholic patriarchy is not just democratizing, it is also egalitarian and, most importantly here, reciprocal. The interpersonal friendships forged between survivors and these priests firmly centers the generative quality of survivor suffering within the Roman Catholic tradition.
As priestly companions, Sipe and Doyle offer spiritual reconciliation, a sacramental healing beyond the reach of secular therapists. As with the wisdom survivors and their saints coproduce, there is a reciprocity to this brand of forgiveness. Whereas Brown argued that saints were conduits for divine wisdom and healing, I am pointing out that the process of survivor sanctification is one through which these laypersons also seek to heal their church. As I demonstrated in the prior chapter, many survivors want to forgive Catholic clergy, and they yearn for public acts of confession and penance from their prelates. That is not a dynamic wherein survivors stand outside of their church, but rather from which the Chicago survivor movement imagines itself at the very center of American Catholic identity. In addition to taking on the whistle-blowing role, by asking survivors for their forgiveness, Sipe and Doyle ensured their own sanctification.

Third, the friendship model accounts for the embodied hope of survivors for changes within this world, during their lifetimes. In their ecclesiastical agenda, Chicago survivors seek less to dismantle the Roman Catholic hierarchy than to be heard by it, perhaps represented within it, and foremost acknowledged as a part of the Catholic tradition. Sipe’s and Doyle’s dual positionality as insiders turned outsiders gives survivors hope and encouragement that other priests might also join the survivor movement. Johnson uplifts the primacy of hope within her articulation of co-discipleship. Laypersons and their saints, Johnson argues, work in tandem as “partners, companions, co-disciples… one witnessing to the other.” Companionship thus returns us to the fundamental markers of

sainthood as heroic witness. This is what Robert Browning observed in arguing that Byzantine hagiography was centered around “the counter hero of the dispossessed.”

In sum, the Chicago survivor movement suggests that the classic paradigms of friendship and patronage are neither dichotomous nor exclusive. Chicago survivors have cultivated a set of perceived emotional relationships with Doyle and Sipe and, at the same time, they cherish as relics, as devotional objects, the material culture that represents those emotions. Alongside Doyle’s manual, Sipe’s books adorn survivors’ home bookshelves and, not uncommonly, a place on the mantle or in a curio cabinet. Doyle’s and Sipe’s writings are adored as objects in and of themselves, the precise content of each text insignificant by comparison to the (com)passion and martyrdom represented therein. For survivors, these documents also possess the power to produce change in the Church and to address survivor suffering through the legal system and through mental health support. Narratives of Sipe’s and Doyle’s prophetic wisdom, miraculous courage, and sacrificial martyrdom provide survivors with saints that are both prophets and friends. The narratives that survivors tell themselves about these men is more religiously relevant than their historicity.

Conclusion

Bellah, have suggested that the need for living saints may be a distinctly post-secular social development. Within that reading, the analysis I have presented here could potentially be refashioned into a case study in contemporary American spirituality. But that leap would be premature. Rather, as I have stressed throughout this chapter, Chicago survivors have imagined their saints through a thoroughly Catholic lens. Likewise, they uphold Sipe and Doyle as paradigms of their own Catholicity, not as cultural heroes that ought be adored by all Americans. If my analysis is extended beyond the constraints of this chapter, therefore, it should explore more deeply the distinctly postconciliar and liberationist theologies undergirding Sipe and Doyle’s anti-celibate, anti-hierarchical ideologies. As Johnson noted, Lumen Gentium can be read as a signpost pointing away from patronage and towards a renewed sense of saintly companionship within the church. Even more relevant to the Chicago survivor movement, as I have shown in the prior chapters, are the egalitarian and anti-patriarchal resonances of post-conciliar liberationist theologies. But my claim here has been narrower still: this chapter has argued that analyzing Doyle and Sipe as saints helps reconcile the tension between history and myth, the slippage between ethnographer and field subjects. I have not suggested that sainthood is the only analytic for understanding the role of these (ex)priests within the survivor movement. Nor have I extended the sainthood analytic to its fullest. In concluding this section, I will reflect on the limits and further potential of studying survivors’ saints, outlining briefly systematically the clearest theoretical insights gained by my approach.

537 Johnson, Friends of God and Prophets, 116 – 120.
The discursive archive of the clergy sexual abuse survivor movement – particularly the realm of ideas and emotions that continually make and remake sense of their own memories of abuse – has been influenced, constrained even, by a discrete set of priests and former priests that has been embraced by Chicago survivors as their most cherished advocates, as their anointed patrons. In laying survivors’ pain on the steps of the Church, these saints put survivor suffering to work, such that survivor pain became a kind of sacrifice that was cherished and set apart. Through this ambitious framework, my goal has been to bring together the historical and ethnographic observations of the preceding chapters.

My position qua ethnographic theorist is consonant with the sociological premise that the category of sainthood offers a unique vantage into the Chicago survivor community’s deepest values and fears. This is the same starting point that inspired many prior studies of “official” saints. In his 1962 research on canonization, Pierre Delooz identified his “point of departure” as the simple “observation that for nearly two thousand years, a social group, the Roman Catholic Church, has been recognizing certain people as saints. The study of these persons is likely to teach us something about the group which selected them.”538 Or, as the authors of one of the most comprehensive sociologies of sainthood more eloquently stated, “We study saints in order to understand piety; we study piety in order to understand society, for it is one of our basic premises that the pursuit as well as the perception of holiness mirrors social values and concerns.”539 Furthermore, as

539 Weinstein and Bell, Saints and Society, 6.
Robert Hertz intuited in his pioneering study of the cult of St. Besse, sainthood as a category can offer unparalleled insight into the “religious consciousness” of small and isolated communities. This is precisely because saints are constructed, socially and discursively, along the lines of local ideologies, interests, and conflicts. Stated most succinctly by Delooz, “All saints are more or less constructed, in the sense that being necessarily saints for other people, they are remodeled in the collective representation which is made of them.” As Robert Orsi and others have highlighted, this process of constructing saints by and for some people means that other groups are inherently marginalized and excluded. Saints are one means through which religious communities demarcate the boundaries between themselves and other religious groups, between their political goals and rival theological interpretations.

Indeed, the category of sainthood is always tied up in struggles over power and authority. Leaders in the Roman Catholic hierarchy have long been cognizant of this correlation, and it is one of the chief reasons why the Church created a formal and rigid process for official canonization. Sainthood is a similarly political category in other religions as well. Within their comparative study of global sainthoods, Richard Kieckhefer and George Bond define the category based on the political “tensions” saints embody, tensions personified in the saint through the double move of “imitability and otherness.” In a more recent comparative study, Francoise Meltzer and Jas Elsner stress that sainthood

540 Hertz, 191, in Wilson, 87.
543 Bond and Kieckhefer, 243.
is such a dynamic instance of ontological “intensification” that categorically (regardless of which religious tradition one examines) “the holy man or woman provides a space in which to think differently, against and outside socially normative patterns.”

It is precisely in this excess, David Tracy then argues, that the process of Roman Catholic canonization is particularly political. The standards for canonization, Tracy theorizes, are foremost an effort by the Roman Catholic hierarchy to “control, domesticate, trivialize,” neutralize, or appropriate the political interests of local Catholic populations.

My research into these living saints builds on a number of prior studies, which have pointed to the fact that the very act of naming a saint is not only theological but also intrinsically political move. Stories about Sipe and Doyle as martyrs or saints do not merely fulfill the individual needs of, for example, Rick or Shawn. Rather, these narratives support and nourish the broader Chicago survivor community, which has perceived itself as being under the continuous scrutiny of the archdiocese since Cardinal Bernardin refused to acknowledge the 1991 conference. Towards that end, the analysis I have presented in this chapter is ethnographic and discursive. My theoretical use of sainthood is meant to provoke and to illustrate, but this is not a study of devotionalism. It is useful for me to examine the analogy between Shawn’s correspondence with Doyle and the tender love one might display towards a traditional relic, such as a saints’ clothing or bone fragments. But Sipe’s and Doyle’s books are not bone fragments; they are words. Nevertheless, the sanctification of these men within and among survivors suggests that something has been

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544 Meltzer, Saints, ix.
545 Tracy, in Meltzer, Saints, 98.
lost on historians in our hurried conclusion that Vatican II ushered in an era of decreased devotional presence. Did the rapid, hierarchical removal of saintly iconography and prayers from most parishes in the 1970s extinguish lay relationships with the saints, or have some lay Catholics transferred those devotional practices to the worship of living, albeit perhaps imagined, relationships?

For survivors, the stories about the lives of these saints are omnipresent, even and especially when Sipe and Doyle are bodily absent, but that is not akin, for example, to what Robert Orsi has called “abundance” and “real presence.”\(^546\) Rather, I think it is more akin to the study of collective identity that guided Elizabeth Castelli’s analysis of Christian martyrdom. “The notion of collective memory,” Castelli observes, “allows one to move past often unresolvable questions of ‘what really happened’ to questions of how particular ways of construing the past enable communities to constitute and sustain themselves.”\(^547\) Castelli’s lens has allowed me to analyze the way that Doyle and Sipe harnessed the pain and suffering of survivors, and how, in turn, survivors have recouped dignity and meaning through the discourse these saints have produced. Within this Foucauldian framework, we can recognize that the dense and emotional reform discourse – sometimes vitriolic, sometimes soft, always painful – produced by the Chicago survivor movement is not a modern departure from Catholic ways of being; it is, rather, consonant with the long

\(^{546}\) Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth*, 18.

\(^{547}\) Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 5.
trajectory of Catholic identity wherein oppositional selfhoods have been (re)constituted with and against “the collective memory of the religious suffering of others.”

Instead of focusing on the observation that survivors worship these saints, I focused on the gaps, the stark inconsistencies, between the historic documents produced by Sipe and Doyle and the subsequent sanctification of those documents (and their authors) within the Chicago survivor community. This was mirrored, often, by the slippage between my critical reading and the emotions I was observing ethnographically. In ignoring the devotional aspects at play, my aim has not been to diminish the reality of survivors’ intimate relationships with these saints. I am simply more interested in the myths that these saints have constructed via survivors, and the myths survivors have in turn constructed about these men. In exploring this dialectic process of myth making itself, I hope that I did not inadvertently demystify survivor sainthood. I selected the discursive method because it provided a critical yet sympathetic way to reconcile the historical Sipe and Doyle with holy visages of these saints as seen through the eyes of my field subjects. Exploring this slippage helps lay bare the politics of the Chicago sexual abuse survivor movement.

As I have argued, most Chicago survivors worship these men as possessing a divine grace that transcends the sanctity of even the founders of the movement, including Jeanne Miller and Barbara Blaine. Survivors identify with – indeed, they construct their identity through – the perceived compassion shared with these non-abused saints. In addition to this suffering, there are at least three forms of death involved in the construction of survivors’ saints: survivors describe these living saints as “martyrs,” and

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548 Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory*, 4.
some survivors describe *themselves* as having already died spiritually, and physical death is now also omnipresent within the aging population of the Chicago survivor movement. (As of this writing, five members of the Chicago survivor community have died since the inception of my fieldwork.) However, these metaphorical deaths are *not* the quintessential quality of survivor sainthood. Rather, it is the spiritual and digital omnipresence of these men that has compelled me to categorize them as survivors’ saints. As with conventional saints, Sipe, Doyle, and lesser survivors’ saints are marked by their “real presence” when they are bodily absent.\(^549\) That is, when Chicago survivors meet, these saints are invoked *as though they were there*.

Survivor sainthood thus bears out the same trend that I have observed in each of the previous chapters, namely that the survivor movement was enlivened by the spirit of Vatican II, particularly the postconciliar theological push to decenter the power and authority of the hierarchical clerical system with the collective discernment and moral wisdom of the People of God. In other words, the conciliar impulse expressed most succinctly in *Lumen Gentium*, particularly the sections of that dogmatic constitution which expanded the communion of saints as including all living faithful, has become a fixture of the living theology of the Chicago survivor movement. But survivors’ lived, embodied actualizations of Vatican II move beyond, at times even contradict, the scholarly presuppositions that have guided postconciliar historiography. The witness of these saints is the touchstone of survivor piety. Survivors worship as relics the writings,

\(^{549}\) See Robert A. Orsi, “When 2+2=5: Can we begin to think about unexplained religious experiences in ways that acknowledge their existence?” in *The American Scholar*, March 1, 2007.
correspondence, websites, and photographs of these men. We must attend to the likelihood
that the annual survivor conferences hosted by Linkup, SNAP, and VOTF, are, at least in
part, pilgrimages made by survivors across the country to witness these saints in person, to
have the chance to touch them, to be immortalized in photographs alongside them. Indeed,
it is through these very rituals of venerations that survivors have made these men de facto
saints. And new saints may be on the horizon; sainthood, as we have seen, is continually
(re)constructed alongside survivors’ struggles with religious belonging and political
identity.
CONCLUSION

The Politics of Survivorhood in Context

In conclusion, I want to consider, How does this case study of the Chicago survivor movement contribute to our understanding of the history of Roman Catholicism in the United States? First, the history of the survivor movement suggests a broader reconsideration of whether the Second Vatican Council actually signaled a decisive revolution within the Church. Concomitantly, the politics of survivorhood defy the extant dichotomies that have come to define Catholic Studies (liberal vs. conservative, traditionalist vs. progressive, pre- vs. post-Vatican II). Secondly, survivors’ capacity to call the Church to accountability demonstrates the extent to which a minority population of the culturally- and religiously-disenfranchised can provide a prophetic critique of ecclesiastical authority, even in the industrialized, globalized north. The democratizing agenda of the Chicago survivor movement in part supports our extant understanding that American Catholic laypersons embody a broader national, democratic impulse. Survivors’ influence on the American juridical and legislative landscape likewise suggests a less stark boundary between Church and state.

Beyond Vatican II

As we have seen, many qualities of the Chicago survivor movement are descended from the religious subcultures of Catholic Worker personalism and women’s liturgical innovation. Other aspects of American Catholicism also molded survivor theology, including Catholic Action and liberation theology. Likewise, the culture of survivorhood has been influenced by broader historical experiences that are outside the focus of this work, including: Vietnam War protests, second-wave feminism, the black power and civil rights movements, the suburbanization of Chicago’s white parishes, the AIDS movement, the economic growth of the 1980s and 1990s, daytime television talk shows and the concomitant rise of the 24/7 news cycle, New Age healing, Alcoholics’ Anonymous and the self-help movement, changes in the way clinical psychologists treat abuse victims, and legal and juridical changes.

Where does Vatican II stand, we might ask, in relation to all of these influences on the survivor movement? To answer that question, I return to the politics of survivorhood, the term that I have used throughout to encapsulate the set of seven political and ecclesiological goals that have defined the Chicago survivor movement over the past thirty years, namely: (i) the recovery of voice as a means to survive abuse; (ii) the privileging of local communal conscience and democratic processes; (iii) the suspicion of patriarchal communities, prayers, and texts; (iv) a lived anthropology of communal suffering; (v) an approach to the “whole person” that integrates medical and religious approaches to heal body and soul; (vi) a set of judicial and legislative reforms that imagines global child abuse
activism through a distinctly American Catholic framework; and (vii) a critique of clerical culture in favor of the ecclesiological definition of church as “the People of God.” Of these, only survivors’ emphasis on the “People of God” language from Lumen Gentium stands out as unmistakably related to the Second Vatican Council. Even then, I wonder whether the preconciliar concept of the Mystical Body of Christ was not at least as influential in shaping what “People of God” signify to and for clergy sexual abuse survivors.

On the one hand, we might appraise Vatican II as an affirmation of Nina Polcyn’s liturgical innovations and of Patty Crowley’s insistence on lay participation. Moreover, through the speeches and writings of survivor saints – including not only Tom Doyle and Richard Sipe, but also individuals like Sr. Joan Chittister, Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne M. Burke, and Fr. Donald Cozzens – the survivor movement has become unmistakably suffused with much of the postconciliar language that we associate with the “Spirit” of Vatican II. On the other hand, in the years following the Second Council, both Polcyn and Crowley were pushed even further towards the margins of American Catholic identity. Polcyn retreated from her friendship with Jack Egan and redoubled her efforts to promote pacifism and fund women’s ordination. Crowley severed all ties with Msgr. Hillenbrand and turned her attention inward, away from a global vision of married couples and towards a small group of women who gathered weekly to consecrate and share the Eucharist. Similarly, Marilyn Steffel was extricated from diocesan and parishional life, and Barbara Blaine found little support for funding new houses of hospitality in Chicago. If
these four women were truly emblematic of Vatican II, then what does their subsequent marginalization imply about the lived legacy of the Council in the U.S.?

From the viewpoint of social history, Vatican II was only one – and by no means the most direct – of the many influences that have shaped the survivor’s political and ecclesiological goals. In this case study, neither the Council itself nor the major documents it produced, narrowly conceived, directly shaped the clergy sexual abuse survivor movement. Instead, the Chicago survivor movement was influenced by a longer, grassroots set of relationships and devotional practices that I have discussed. In other words, even though the survivor movement did not exist until the 1980s, its lineage stretches back into the early decades of the twentieth century. This religious lineage is far more diffuse, fragmented, and heterogeneous than intra-Catholic typologies. The politics of survivorhood does not fit neatly into the bifurcating terms generally used to describe the religious politics of contemporary Catholics. One of the broadest conclusions of this research, therefore, is that the commonplace assumption that survivors are “Vatican II Catholics” obscures more than it clarifies.

**The Power of the Abused**

I was surprised when I first recognized the extent to which the survivor movement had descended from the Catholic Worker and liberationist theologies. But should I have been? These prior Catholic countercultures struggled with many of the same emotions that have pervaded the survivor movement, particularly the shared experiences of being silenced, marginalized, and abandoned. From this viewpoint, it seems less surprising that
survivors have found solace in, and further built upon, theologies and rituals that value and uplift those on the margins of Catholic culture. When Chicago survivors began to speak out communally about their pain and suffering, they took up a prophetic view of authority. Even as survivors continue to regard clerical culture with emotions of pain, fear, and resentment, they criticize that clerical privilege by taking up alternative strands of American Catholicism. In both their suffering and their ecclesiology, survivors revive the past in the present. Survivors’ intimate knowledge of clerical abuse has given them, paradoxically, a compelling position from which to recognize clerical misdeeds and to criticize clerical culture.

Changes within the Archdiocese of Chicago and the state of Illinois are testimony, in part, to the powerful influence that the Chicago survivor movement has had. At the state level, the movement has achieved tremendous reforms to the Illinois Statutes of Limitations (SOLs) pertaining to childhood sexual abuse. Chicago survivors led the statewide lobbying efforts that resulted in the Illinois SOL amendments of 1990, 1993, 2003, and 2014. In 1990, the Illinois General Assembly increased the SOL from the age of majority to the age of majority plus one year. In 1993, the legislature increased the

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551 For the current law, see the Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS) § 735, 5/13-202.2, “Childhood sexual abuse,” (a) – (f).
552 It should be apparent to readers that these legislative dates correspond precisely to a one-year lag behind major moments within the Chicago survivor movement. The dates above are the calendar year that each amendment became effective in. In all cases, the amendments were legislated in the calendar year prior to the date they went into effect. Miller’s crusade as Hillary Stile peaked in 1989; the accusations against Bernardin were made in 1992; Boston was in 2002; and the Cardinal’s Dinner Protest and Penn State scandal were in 2012.
553 “The age of majority” is the term for legal adulthood. In most cases, Illinois residents are considered to have reached the age of majority at 18, meaning that only survivors age nineteen or younger could bring suit for having been sexually abused as a minor.
SOL dramatically, to ten years from the age of discovery. In 2003, the state doubled this period to twenty years from the age of discovery. And in 2014, in direct response to the 2012 Cardinal’s Dinner Protest (Chapter 1) and Blaine’s lobbying in Springfield (Chapter 2), the state of Illinois eliminated entirely the SOL for all acts of childhood sexual abuse occurring on or after 2013.

The Archdiocese of Chicago has likewise attempted to implement major reforms over the past thirty years. In response to Miller and Steffel’s founding of LINKUP, Cardinal Bernardin in 1991 chartered the “Commission on Clerical Sexual Misconduct with Minors.” The commission’s report, released June 15, 2002 (two months before LINKUP’s “Breaking the Silence” conference) was widely lauded by Catholic press and formed the blueprint for similar charters in other major dioceses across the United States. In particular, other archbishops were quick to copy Bernardin’s model of establishing an archdiocesan review board that included several clergy, an equal number of lay professionals, and one survivor, and a separate diocesan office devoted primarily to processing allegations of clerical abuse. As I analyzed in Chapter 4, there was a chill put on diocesan reforms in the wake of the failed effort to indict Cardinal Bernardin on multiple sets of allegations in 1993 and, it must be noted here, Bernardin did not voluntarily disclose the names of any accused priests during that freeze. Yet a decade later, archdiocesan support for reforms appeared strong in comparison to other major U.S.

554 “The age of discovery” is legally defined as the date at which a victim discovered that they were abused. As such, “discover” encompasses remembering the event(s), realizing that the event was harmful, as well as recognizing that said abuse was illegal.
555 The Archdiocese of Chicago’s office devoted to this task has undergone several name changes. As of 2014, this arm of the archdiocese was called the Office for Child Abuse Investigations and Review (CAIR).
dioceses. In the immediate wake of Boston, 2002, Cardinal George removed eight abusive clerics who had, until that date, been allowed to remain in the active ministry. The following year, George released the names of an additional 22 credibly accused priests. And in 2006, the cardinal disclosed 55 additional abusers that had been priests in the archdiocese. Pressure from a number of groups, foremost LINKUP, SNAP, and CCC, forced Bernardin and George to make these public disclosures.

While it remains for subsequent studies to trace the causal influence of American survivors on global and national trends, it is fundamental that we recognize that both the Catholic Church and the United States have also implemented significant child abuse reforms since Jeanne Miller, Barbara Blaine, and Marilyn Steffel first came forward. In 2002, the USCCB adopted the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People which, among other reforms, created the Church’s National Review Board and led to the USCCB commissioning the most exhaustive statistical studies of clergy sexual abuse in the United States, both conducted by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice at the City University of New York. In 2003, Congress abolished the criminal SOL for victims of

559 As mentioned earlier, the John Jay studies were conducted in two phases. See Kathleen McChesney et. al., “The Nature and Scope of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests and Deacons in the United States, 1950 – 2002: A Report by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops,” March 22, 2004; and Karen J. Terry et. al.,
child sexual abuse falling under federal jurisdiction.\footnote{The Causes and Context of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Catholic Priests in the United States, 1950 – 2010: A Report Presented to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops by the John Jay College Research Team,” May 18, 2011.} Many survivors have likewise benefited from Congress’ creation, in 2006, of the national sex offender registry.\footnote{As with most federal laws regarding SOL, this legislation, however, only applies to the small number of clergy sexual abuse survivors who are able to prove that their abuse involved their being abused in multiple state jurisdictions and trafficked for abuse purposes across state lines. See 18 U.S.C. §3283.} In addition to lobbying for these federal reforms, nearly a dozen LINKUP and SNAP survivors testified throughout the early 2000s in state legislatures across the country. Blaine’s testimony, in particular, was noted within the bills that ultimately failed to pass the senate in her home state of Ohio.\footnote{See the “Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of July 27, 2006,” §109 – 248, 2006 U.S.C.C.A.N. (120 Stat. 587).}

At an international level, too, the reach of the Chicago survivor movement has been visible. SNAP has established a strong foothold in several European countries, including Ireland, where Blaine collaborates frequently with the broader sexual abuse nonprofit One in Four, whose motto is “From Surviving to Thriving.” And in an unprecedented effort that resulted in tremendous publicity for SNAP, Blaine successfully persuaded the United Nations International Criminal Court (ICC) to consider evidence that, in systemically ignoring the problem of child sexual abuse, the Vatican had committed “crimes against humanity.” The SNAP complaint, filed with the ICC in 2011, was co-filed by lawyers from the nonprofit Center for Constitutional Rights. To support the complaint, Blaine’s team submitted some 20,000 pages of textual evidence to the ICC, and toured twelve European countries.
nations to publicize the complaint. In May 2013, the ICC prosecutor assigned to the complaint decided not to open a full investigation. Simultaneously, however, two United Nations’ panels, the UN Committee Rights of the Child and the UN Committee Against Torture, proceeded with parallel sets of hearings at which they compelled Vatican diplomats to testify. Although no tangible punishments resulted, both committees issued concluding reports that strongly rebuked the Vatican for its handling of the child sexual abuse crisis.\(^{563}\) While some Chicago survivors are upset that the ICC complaint has stalled, others have rejoiced in the likewise-compelling interpretation that the UN hearings represented a dramatic display of international moral condemnation. The survivors taking this second perspective feel that their movement has not only succeeded in speaking but also finally been heard. For those survivors, at least, the silence has been broken.

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———. *Is Nothing Sacred?: The Story of a Pastor, the Women He Sexually Abused, and the Congregation He Nearly Destroyed*.


